

Beauty and a Dream

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Beauty and a Dream

by [MiniMaestro](#)

Summary

George is tired of everyone thinking he can't do things. It's time for action.

Exploring that dangerous ravine, returning with riches, celebrated a hero... that'd probably do it.

If only life could be that easy, like a fairy tale... adventure, exploring new lands, monsters to defeat, being imprisoned, learning new skills, making new friends...

Wait what.

[Based loosely upon the plot of 'Beauty and the Beast', in which the Minecraft world is real, and George seeks exciting and reasonably dangerous adventure]

It's A Quiet Life It Seems

It wasn't hard finding the place. It seemed that even nature had abandoned the old ravine - the air was dead and silent; not even the air dared whisper here. George didn't so much notice as felt this - a few steps previously he had at least been able to hear the bees buzzing behind him, the cows calling out to each other as he had half fallen into the darkness below him. He liked to think of it more as strategic jumping with intentional loss of footing. George smiled a hidden smile to himself; his own thoughts often amused him.

He peered into the darkness in front of him, grateful for the rays of sun above him signifying it was midday. He had been running since dawn and had only taken a small break to eat before braving the edge of the ravine. At least the light had given him some guidance to navigate his way down. The rock faces on either side twisted and jutted out at peculiar angles, with ledges and passages leading further into the darkness above him. It would be perfect for an ambush... and neither Sapnap nor BadBoyHalo would notice he was gone - they'd climb down here one day and see his rotting corpse and probably laugh. George sighed to himself; he completely took back what he thought about his thoughts.

Carefully, keeping one eye on the shadowy passages above him, he reached into his backpack for some sticks and coal. Within a few moments, a puff of smoke clouded his vision; he squinted, coughing slightly as he blew on the embers before holding up the flaming torch to the side of his head. George instantly relaxed, shoulders visibly lowering slightly; he hadn't realised how tense he had been. He forced himself to breathe as he started inching his way forward, hugging the left wall, the dancing light from the torch causing him to dart his eyes around at the flickering shadows they created. He spotted some iron ore ahead with delight and shuffled forward, ears attentive, footsteps quiet. And they said he couldn't mine on his own. He'd show them.

After reaching the iron ore and mining it carefully for what seemed like days, George chanced a peek behind him as he tucked it safely into his backpack, to see how far he had come. He suddenly stood up straight as he realised, he had only entered a few metres into the ravine, and there was still light behind him. "Oh, come onnn!" he exclaimed exasperatedly out loud, letting his pickaxe hang loosely to his left hand side for a moment, completely forgetting the darkness his back was now facing. An unnatural click of bones against bones behind him had him immediately running, ducking and swerving as arrows shot past him, narrowly missing. BadBoyHalos' voice echoed in his head from years ago, of how he had described enchanted skeletons with powerful bows, deadly archers; and how the sound they made was like the scrape of teeth from a hungry beast.

He scrambled up the way he had come ungracefully, slipping and falling in places as he glanced behind him, only to see the edge of a bow barely visible in the darkness, the lowered sun above him now casting itself over the glint of the tip of an arrow. George could see the skeletal fingers clenched around it, as if its unholy grasp could not be undone. He let out an ungodly scream three octaves too high as the arrow loosened and zipped towards him, and George felt a thud of impact that almost knocked him off the ledge he was on. Unstable but still holding on, he noticed he wasn't in pain and took the chance to keep climbing, the arrows now falling short of their target as he emerged from the top of the ravine and collapsed on his side, noting the return of sounds of life and the warmth of the sun with relief.

After a few moments, he sat up, forcing himself to be logical. George was not a logical person; he was more the type to act impulsively... which was precisely what he was going to get told off for... if he was caught. George felt unnaturally sick, the collar of his shirt sticking slightly to his neck due to the sweat that was seemingly only just stopping. He was shaky as he took to his feet,

walking back towards the South. Gradually, the shaky walk became a jog, and then a run - by the time he could see the fortified village up in front of him, it was almost night. George had never been so far out from the small town in one day, let alone at night, and he wasn't intending to add it to his list of experiences just yet.

Racing up to the large fortified doors he paused for breath, only just starting to feel the stitches in his side for having ran for so long. The iron golems on guard scrutinised him carefully with their eyes for a split second before being satisfied he posed no threat and opening the heavy gates. George didn't know whether he felt insulted that they had taken so little time to consider this, or grateful that the doors were being opened so soon. He decided to go for gratitude and jumped through the doors before they'd even fully opened. The golems made a slight grunt of apparent disapproval before closing the doors behind him, back on their post on the outside to keep watch and to defend their people.

George wandered around the well-lit town, noting with pleasure that the new fountain was being admired by the other villagers. It had been his idea to include some stone half-slabs for the villagers to sit on, and he noted that a small child was happily swinging their legs as they read a book from the nearby library. He wondered what kind of book they were reading. George was usually so busy handling additions to the village he rarely had time to actually spend time enjoying them. He became aware of people stopping and starting to look at him, heads tilted to one side in confusion at seeing him out amongst them at such a late hour. George turned his face away as the child looked up at him; he wasn't good at looking people in the eyes... he was a bit too shy for that. He quickly moved on, heading towards the centre piece of the town; a large town hall, with a large house winding onto the back of it. George felt his heart sank as he quickly made his way to the house, the pristine lanterns winking at him - it was almost as if they knew he was out too late to be seeing them.

George opened the door gently, closing it softly behind him. He sneaked towards the staircase, freezing as a voice called out "George, come into the kitchen." George slumped slightly and shuffled his way towards the kitchen, sticking his head around the wall to see what awaited him. Sappnap was there, folded arms, worry and anger painted across his face. His expression grew worse as he saw George, and George reluctantly walked into the kitchen. He glanced at the map on the wall, which had the colour blue and yellow marked at "Home"; a black colour was at the front gates.

"So. Would you care to explain yourself?" Sappnap asked, his voice barely containing itself to levels of civility. George snapped his head away from the map the ground.

"I don't know..." George answered unhelpfully, willing himself to somehow melt himself into the floor.

Sappnap blew air from his nose sharply. "Maybe you can start by telling me where you have been all day. Or maybe I somehow missed you disappearing off the map of the town." George winced at the sarcasm, feeling the weight of the rucksack on his back. He shrugged it off, only to have Sappnap gasp as it clumped to the floor, suspiciously loud. Following Sappnap's gaze, he realised why he hadn't felt the pain of the arrow earlier; he had assumed he had been in shock at the time and then had completely forgotten about it. But there it was, protruding out of the rucksack, slightly off centre to the left. If he hadn't been wearing that backpack... George didn't want to think about it.

Neither did Sappnap by the looks of it as he watched George with horror. "Were you... were you in a cave or something?" he asked in disbelief, looking between the arrow and George. George opened his mouth to speak but stopped as he heard the front door open and close and heavy boots walk

towards him. He turned to see BadBoyHalo standing there, carefully suited in almost sparkling armour; apart from the dark green blood that was splattered on his boots, and partly up his right leg. He noticed George staring in disgust and smugly smiled.

"We had some trouble with a zombie or two. No big deal." He grinned from ear to ear, turning to Sarnap for approval, only to have it fade at the apparent anger on Sarnaps' face. He looked between their expression, to the arrow and the backpack, and then to George again before it clicked.

"Ah. So that explains where the extra copy of the map went then." He smirked unkindly as he saw George sink even more, delighting in his every discomfort. "You know," he continued, crouching down and rummaging through George's backpack, "there's a reason why we marked a ravine on the map but haven't gone in. It's too dangerous. Even for us." He frowned as he lifted the backpack up with ease and tipped it upside, the large hunks of iron ore falling out followed by a compass, quills, paper, wood and coal. The sound of the ore dropping to the ground was deafening and made George and Sarnap wince.

"I thought... if I could bring some back..." George started hesitantly, hating his voice for how desperate it sounded as Sarnap and BadBoyHalo looked at him, confused. BadBoyHalo laughed suddenly, realising what George was trying to say.

"Oh George... oh George, no... seriously? You thought you could have your own armour? With this?" he motioned towards the raw material and rolled his eyes. "There is barely enough for boots, let alone a full set!" he laughed as George finally allowed himself to feel angry for a moment.

"Of course I know that! I'm not an idiot!" he protested, causing BadBoyHalo to laugh even louder. Sarnap looked at BadBoyHalo warningly before turning to George, his eyes gentler than before.

"George... we've talked about this. BadBoyHalo kills the monsters and provides food for the village. I collect materials and smelt all the ores. You..." he trailed off, expecting George to finish.

"I make the town happy and keep it functioning..." he mumbled begrudgingly. BadBoyHalo had stopped laughing by this point and seemed to be more sympathetic, gently touching George's elbow.

"Think about how beautiful the town looks, how happy and safe everyone is, how everyone is able to get along with their lives because of you." George nervously looked up to see BadBoyHalo earnestly looking at him, with Sarnap nodding in the background. "I saw the fountain you had made. It's so simple and works well. Just like you!" he teased, causing George to pull away.

"Shut up!" he said moodily, unable to contain a smile as Sarnap joined in with BadBoyHalos' laughter this time.

"Seriously though George," Sarnap said, leaning over to hug George, "please don't go to the ravine. We'd miss you if you weren't around..."

George accepted the hug in defeat, watching as BadBoyHalo examined the map that had fallen out.

"You'd barely notice I was gone... I only see you guys every month or two it seems!" George pointed out.

"Yes, well, patrols are long and tough, and gathering materials doesn't get any easier... it's a combined effort to bring in the haul every few months..." BadBoyHalo muttered absentmindedly, examining the map. He looked at George. "This is about half a day's ride away; did you steal a

horse?" he accused, causing George to raise his hands in defence, breaking the hug from Sapnap.

"No, no, I did not, and I wouldn't. I ran as soon as it was light this morning." George laughed alongside them as he continued "I was starving when I came in, I thought I was going to pass out!" As he said this, George suddenly realised he hadn't eaten yet and his stomach growled loudly. He grabbed the table top for support as it suddenly hit him how far he'd run today. "I'm going to grab a steak and head upstairs" he muttered, shoving items back into his rucksack. He paused for a moment, eyeing up the map in BadBoyHalos' hands.

"Not a chance George" BadBoyHalo said sternly. "You're just going to get yourself killed. Don't even think about going there again." He folded up the map and tucked it into the top of his armour. "I'm putting this map under lock and key, so you won't be able to see it ever again. You're not an adventurer George. You're just... George. And that's just who you are."

Sapnap sighed as George silently nodded, and headed out of the kitchen and out of sight. Sapnap turned to BadBoyHalo as he refused to look at him.

"Don't pull a George on me and look me in the eye - at some point, you have to acknowledge George doesn't want to be stuck here all his life." Sapnap started before being cut across by BadBoyHalo. The mood had suddenly changed now George had left the room; it had become darker, and more serious. BadBoyHalo let his anger burst through as he began to quietly fume.

"He doesn't belong out there. Did you see the arrow? God knows, he could have died. Because he's an idiot. What kind of moron goes out to one of the most dangerous places we know of and doesn't at least try and steal some armour or a horse? I wouldn't have minded so much if he had at least TRIED to protect himself. But he didn't. He doesn't understand the danger out there. We have our roles and our own rules for a reason. George knows that." BadBoyHalo furiously took out the map from his chest place before ripping it up aggressively. He turned to Sapnap angrily as the pieces floated to the floor. "He will never be allowed to go out on his own. And he will never be allowed out of the village again, I'll have every iron golem we have on lookout for if he tries again, I'll ha-"

"Fine, you've made your point." Sapnap said weakly, waving off the last of BadBoyHalos rant.

"Tell me honestly if you think George would survive one day out there, without protection, without knowing how to hunt food, without knowing how to craft properly."

BadBoyHalo nodded in satisfaction as Sapnap whispered a soft "No."

On the other side of the kitchen wall, George stopped listening and walked silently to his room, gently laying his now slightly cracked compass out on his bedside table and staring at the red tip in the moonlight, pointed towards the kitchen, to the only friends he had in the world; to 'home'.

What More is There?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George failed to rise out of bed the next morning, opting instead to tuck himself further into his blankets. Through his squinted eyes, he could see the sun was streaming down through the window, gleaming off his compass too brightly for comfort.

He sighed, going over the events of the previous day once more, despite having tortured himself with it by recalling it in his mind throughout most of the night. A knock at the door drew his attention away from his self-pitying.

"George, we should talk." Sapnap's voice floated through, the worried tone from last night gone to be replaced by his usual authoritative and sure voice. George pulled the covers over his head and groaned in reply, mumbling words along the lines of telling him to go away and that he wasn't up for a conversation. As per, Sapnap was having none of that. George heard him enter the room and could almost picture the look on his face.

"George, you know how I'm quite sensible and when I say stuff it's usually a good idea?" Sapnap started, walking over to the edge of George's bed. George felt the edge of the mattress weigh down slightly as Sapnap sat, and only offered another collection of noises in reluctant agreement.

Sapnap rolled his eyes before continuing "Well, I don't think it's a good idea for you to go out on your own. But I also don't want you to be unhappy. So, I have come up with a compromise which I think you'll like." Sapnap noticed the shape under the covers that was George sitting up slightly, and took it as a sign to continue.

"So, BadBoyHalo and I have decided: we're giving you some time off for you to do whatever you like... inside the village walls. Now," Sapnap hastily continued as the mass of covers suddenly flopped down almost impossibly further into the mattress, "... I feel like you'll like this because we know how busy you are; all the villagers were talking about how strange it was to see you yesterday evening... not just because of the late hour, but because you hardly spend time out and about. You're just constantly planning the next big things to make everyone happy... but not yourself."

George sighed heavily from under his blankets, dramatically throwing them off in one bundle at Sapnap and sitting up, cursing slightly at the head rush he momentarily gave himself. He watched Sapnap struggle to remove the blankets from his face and when his disgruntled figure finally emerged after a moment or two, George couldn't help but smirk slightly. Not that he probably looked any better, having only just woken up.

Sapnap panted heavily as he finally relieved himself of the blankets and turned to face George, trying to regain his composure. "BadBoyHalo and I have put a hold on all the upcoming projects - until we need to go out and gather more materials, and then you can start planning again and be ready to build by the time we return with supplies." Sapnap stood up, the corner of his mouth turned up slightly as he saw George considering his proposal.

"And what if I wanted to come with you and BadBoyHalo next time? I could help, I know-" George began hopefully, only to falter as Sapnap shook his head.

"George, after what you did yesterday, you're lucky you don't have iron bars instead of glass in

your windows. We care about you and we could have lost you yesterday. You're far too innocent of the world to be able to face it..."

Sapnap hesitated as he reached the door, wondering whether to continue. "...maybe if you can learn to be happy here again first, and give us some time, we can talk about it." George raised his head in surprise but Sapnap had already closed the door behind him.

George quickly got up, feeling strange about the conversation. It was true he had stopped taking time to see the buildings he had put so much work into creating, leaving it to the validation of a villager when it was completed. He wondered how long it had been since he had last seen the town... truly seen it.

Maybe Sapnap had a point. Maybe if he could appreciate what he had accomplished here, and allow himself some self-validation, he would lose interest in the world beyond the great stone walls containing his creations. He doubted it but... for the sake of his friends, he was willing to try.

George almost immediately forgot his aim as he absent-mindedly got changed into his usual outfit, grabbed an apple from the fruit bowl, and walked towards the main square. It was only when he had finished munching and crunching his way through the apple that George realised, he had reached the fountain from the night before. He surveyed it carefully, noticing the slight curves of crafted stone shaping that framed an exquisite marble centre-piece; a dolphin with water shooting majestically out of his snout.

George felt a smile rise to his face as he stared at the elegant creature. Sapnap claimed to have swum with a dolphin once, whilst deep diving for coral. Apparently, the creature had helped Sapnap reach the coral quicker by swimming quickly by his side; only to playfully snatch the coral and deposit it several metres away. George chuckled at the imagery of the game of fetch between the pair before frowning slightly. He had never seen a dolphin. He wasn't even that confident of a swimmer, having had very little chance to practise.

This had been a surprise for Sapnap, to immortalise such a precious memory to him. Nothing could have made George happier than doing something good for his friends, and George was determined to remain feeling that way. He walked around positively, checking in on the townsfolk who all mostly looked the same to him; he awkwardly smiled and laughed through conversations as he wondered around, feeling guilty he didn't know a single name.

Through archways and alleys George explored, remembering buildings that used to be there that had been torn down, stepping through door after door to be welcomed by smiles and open arms, with an eagerness to please. George noted with pleasure how happy everyone was. Within a day, he had managed to receive a free haircut, a change of clothes, more apples than he could carry and had even had a shy young boy run up and present him with a rose. George had taken it and thought his heart might have burst at how adorable the insignificant action was.

George sat down at the fountain and rested all the random items he had accumulated throughout the day. He closed his eyes for a while, listening to the fountain and the sound of rustling water, only for his acute ears to pick up a slight unexpected rustle. His eyes opened in shock as he saw the small child from the previous day looking at him. She avoided his gaze and George felt the irony of that the only person shyer than him was someone three quarters of his age.

"Hello?" George smiled kindly, flinching slightly as his awkwardness made it sound more like a question. The girl glanced at him for a brief moment before turning away, face red. She wordlessly pointed at some of the sticks poking out of one of the boxes he had. It was a box of leftover wood from one of the shops; he had figured Sapnap could find some use for it.

"Would you like them?" He asked gently, and the girl nodded before edging closer, eyeing them up. She smiled sheepishly at him before dragging the box a small distance from George, who politely looked away to ease her nervousness. Reasonably satisfied, the girl turned her back to George, drawing out bits of wood and sticks before running into a nearby shop.

George watched a while away how a group of villagers were talking outside the armoury, one of the few shops he hadn't entered. He could almost feel BadBoyHalos' words physically on his chest, taunting about how his hard-mined iron had been practically worthless. What did he expect from an old wooden pickaxe though?

He noticed the girl running back out of the corner of his eye, only to rummage through more of the boxes and run away again, social expectations and politeness not yet a thing in her life. He turned his gaze back to the villagers, watching them all start to go their separate ways. He suddenly felt a tug at the corner of his shirt, and turned around. His mouth gaped open and his eyes widened as he saw the girl standing there proudly, presenting him with a stone pickaxe.

George had obviously seen weapons and items before, made of different materials; he himself possessed a diamond hoe, a golden shovel, an iron sword and a wooden pickaxe. The first three had been gifts on various birthdays from Sapnap and BadBoyHalo; the pickaxe he had managed to recover from an old box in the attic, which Sapnap and BadBoyHalo had let him keep to stop him pestering.

You don't need a pickaxe. You'd never use it! That was the response whenever George had previously asked for one. He was only given the other items as tokens to never be used; as jokes. He would never have to farm for himself, or dig... and hopefully never have to defend himself. But this...

George wordlessly took the stone pickaxe, heavier than he was used to from his chipped wooden one. His eyes hungrily went over the way she had managed to work the stone into the wood, secure and strong. He had no idea something like this could be crafted so easily, so quickly. He realised he was completely ignoring her as she shuffled awkwardly from side to side, becoming more nervous at his lack of response.

"Is this for me?" George managed to get out, and the girl nodded slowly, uncertain of what to make of George's reaction. "I love it!" George exclaimed suddenly, startling both himself and the girl, who broke into a little grin before half curtsying and running away.

"Wait!" George called after her, drawing the attention of the few remaining villagers around. The girl paused and turned back, unhappy with the sudden attention. She glanced at the setting sun and George suddenly remembered the curfew, which said all villagers were to have returned to their homes by nightfall. Clearly, this girl was uncomfortable just with the sun setting.

"Where did you learn to do that?" he asked desperately as she edged further and further away from him, clearly eager to head home. She pointed at a building behind George, and George turned to see a small bookshop that looked so insignificant it hardly seemed to be there. When George turned around again, she had vanished from sight. George carefully put the pickaxe in his rucksack, as if afraid it might break, before turning his attention behind him.

George stood up, eyeing the building with confusion. It wasn't the main library; it was almost as if it had been forgotten. George frowned, trying to remember how it was still there. Had he forgotten to knock it down previously, when the new library emerged? He barely managed a step towards it before his path was suddenly blocked by two iron golems, accompanied by BadBoyHalo.

"George." His tone was exasperated as he examined George, who instantly began protesting his

innocence for something he hadn't done.

"Bad, I lost track of time! I wasn't going to do anything stupid! I was just..." George trailed off, his eyes darting behind BadBoyHalos' figure momentarily, "... exploring the town! I forgot how much there was to see here!"

That seemed to satisfy BadBoyHalo, who instantly grinned and linked his arm in George's. "I am so happy to hear that George! I knew you'd forgotten how great you are at designing all this! And I really do like the fountain, it was such a good day when..." he rambled on, completely oblivious to George's mind being somewhere completely else as he dragged him through the town. George glanced behind him, the iron golems unimpressively carrying his things behind him towards a different unknown location, and George was thankful he had stowed the stone pickaxe away.

"So, what do you think?" BadBoyHalo looked at George expectantly as they arrived at the entrance to their home.

"About?" George asked, feeling a pang of guilt wash over him as Bads' face drooped slightly.

"Lunch. You and me. My treat!" he beamed, almost jumping up and down on the spot. George shook his head and pulled his arm out of his grasp, opening the doors as they walked in together.

"Sorry Bad, I kind of just want to focus on the town for the next few days. Perhaps another time...?" he offered, and BadBoyHalo smiled a bit too widely.

"Sure, no worries! We'll pencil in a few days' time." George had no chance to object before BadBoyHalo headed quickly to his room, calling a farewell over his shoulder.

George walked to his room and turned off his lanterns, not trusting someone to barge in somehow. He withdrew the stone pickaxe and examined it further in the little light his room had to offer. A small child had made this. In less than a moment. He had simply trusted from Sapnap and BadBoyHalo that such items were difficult to craft.

Tell me honestly if you think George would survive one day out there, without protection, without knowing how to hunt food, without knowing how to craft properly.

George clenched the pickaxe's hilt tightly. He had simply taken that to mean the world was dangerous, but now he thought about the words in a new light. To craft properly... was there more to the crafting he knew? Why had he never questioned it before, how the materials he suggested for buildings were created, how tools were created... that there might be a simple method to achieving such items?

"Tomorrow." George whispered to the night as he hugged the pickaxe close to him after climbing into bed.

"Tomorrow... I find out the truth."

Chapter End Notes

Well, the comments and kudos reaction was so positive for Chapter 1 in just a few hours that I decided to just continue writing!

Probably shooting myself in the foot for not pacing myself but ah well.

Tried to take on board the feedback, please keep leaving criticism and support to keep this story moving!

Seriously, when you see you've made a load of people happy with something you've done, it's quite contagious / inspiring to keep going ahaha :) thank you all so much and hope you enjoy this chapter!

Whose is the face in the darkness?

The brewing stand gurgled away, hungrily eating the fiery powdered fuel and slowly dissolving the red solids within. An automated system closed off a valve to disable any further ingredients into the mixtures before the liquid was separated equally into three tubes. The only light in the crumbled, forbidden room was from an obsidian man-made structure in the corner, half built into the decaying walls.

There was a swirling mass of apparent thin indigo and dark blue glass contained within, and small particles flew out on occasion before fading like weakened fireworks, seemingly unable to survive after a moment of brief life. Occasionally, it seemed to sing a soft kind of music, as if calling someone to its murky depths.

It had succeeded a short while ago.

A tall, cloaked figure suddenly appeared in the portal, clutching the side of their head and staggering out towards the brewing potions, reaching into a barrel beside it with a hurried desperation. He hastily brought out a sliced watermelon and carried it across to the other side of the room, where he took a handful of shining yellow specs out of a chest labelled 'Nuggets'. He ran them to a crafting table and slammed the ingredients together before racing back and hurling it into the top of the brewing stand.

"Come on... come on..." he urged with a hint of annoyance, feeling weaker by the second. He raised a hand to his head again as he felt his body start to give out beneath him. Grasping tightly onto the countertop for support, he impatiently waited for the bubbles to die down. As soon as they had, he snatched one and drank it desperately, downing it in one and reaching for the other almost immediately. This was downed too, and he sighed in instant relief as he lost both his jelly legs and his splitting headache.

He looked down at the last potion, shining out a bright pink, and bottled it for later, placing it gently in his rucksack. He examined the empty bottles on the counter, these liquids he was now almost dependant on. All these potions, all this experience... and yet, he was no closer to finding out the truth.

In a single movement he had thrown both bottles against the wall, savouring the momentary satisfaction as they smashed and glass was splintered across the floor. He slammed both his clenched fists onto the counter, letting out an almost unhuman snarl. His breath was ragged and short as anger boiled inside him, threatening to overspill.

He had died more than once in his attempts to find answers.

He just didn't feel like dying today.

He straightened his back with forced calmness and faced the portal, psyching himself up to go back in. He strode into its murky depths and turned, surveying the room one last time.

A flicker of green seemed to blur with purple for a moment before the portal swallowed him whole.

What happens when we die?

Chapter Notes

Extra long chapter because there's a lot going on George doesn't know about...

Thanks for all the comments and support; hope you enjoy this chapter! :)

To say George was suddenly overwhelmed by the attention Bad was giving him was an understatement. Every five seconds the latter would invite him for lunch, ask George about the buildings he had designed, wander some shops with him, happily skipping ahead only to whirl around, trying to be patient. George loved that he was seeing this positive side to him which he hadn't seen in so long. And being George, he wouldn't have said anything to compromise that positive mood; it was positively infectious.

Still... George had barely had any time alone since the present of the stone pickaxe.

After a morning of roaming the town yet again, Bad led George down a series of alleys George was starting to become very familiar with.

"Bad, where are you taking me?" George questioned suspiciously as Bad continued to pull George by his sleeve, seemingly not hearing him.

"Baaaad. Earth to Bad." George said a little louder, only causing the other to walk a bit faster in response. George rolled his eyes and let himself be pulled along.

Guess it was a surprise then.

He let Bad navigate him further until they came to a break before the square. Without warning Bad suddenly spun around, practically jumping in one place.

"Keep your eyes closed and follow me." Bad ordered, causing a laugh to emit from George.

"How can I follow you if my eyes are closed?" George teased, causing Bad to stop for a moment.

"Oh yeah... okay, you wait here, with your eyes closed, and I will be right back." Bad beamed at George, who unwillingly smiled back. Bad's smile was so infectious sometimes.

"I don't want to wait on my own..." George whined, already bored from having simply stood still for more than a minute. An idea clicked in his head and he tried to look thoughtful.

"Why don't I go wait in the library for you? You'll have to try and find me amongst the shelves or something... bet you won't be able to though!" George challenged, and a glint passed through Bad's eyes.

"You're on! This is going to be so much fun; you are going to love your surprise! As soon as I've collected it..." Bad immediately whirled off, continuously checking over his shoulder to make sure George wasn't following him before rounding a corner and heading up one of the streets. George breathed a sigh of relief before heading to the one shop he had wanted to explore but hadn't, for fear of Bad seeing him. He made his way to the old bookshop and quickly let himself in, shutting

the door behind him.

It's not really lying... he reasoned with himself guiltily. It was a library... or sorts. Just a small one. A small, ordinary...

George suddenly took in the small room he was standing in. There was a small counter almost immediately in front of him, with almost no room to walk around. An old dead bush lay in a clay pot on one side, and a lectern was in front of him. It was, however, what was behind the counter that caused George to stare.

Bookshelves upon bookshelves, going back as far as the eye could see, past where the dim lantern lights covered; and chests upon chests, sticking out in random corners. Random pages spewed across the floor and George thought he could spot some cobwebs on top of the dusty shelves. If he didn't know any better, he'd say the place was abandoned. Maybe he really had designed it and forgotten to tear it down.

"George. Now, this is a pleasant surprise."

George started slightly, leaning closer towards the lectern and the counter in front of him. A shadowy figure emerged from behind a bookshelf, and strode forward with apparent delight.

"I knew Bad would change his mind one day. I told him, he was stupid to think that you would never need to have enchantments for your tools and gear, and you were bound to die at some point by accident. Admittedly, I thought it would have been a lot sooner, I mean, you have done so well, and congrats on that by the way, but finally this shop can be back in business and out in the open. I have every enchantment you could possibly want."

The figure entered the light and George's mouth dropped open as a figure in full diamond armour seemed to materialise in front of him. He had never even seen diamond armour up close before; Bad and Sap insisted that iron was just as good. But this person... they were so covered that it almost seemed like their skin radiated the shiny material. George realised he was staring but luckily the figure didn't seem to notice.

"So, I have the box here. Luckily enchantments don't have a 'past shelf date', right?" the man laughed before opening up a tiny black chest with three red stripes on the top of it from the side of the counter. George's eyes popped open as he blinked and suddenly the figure had a purple box in his hands, before plonking it on the table before him. That... that defied physics. The purple box was bigger than the black box it had just come out of-

"Let's see if they're all still in here... yup, we have all the defence enchantments, a few mending to get you going on your weapons, some infinity and bow enchants in case you're a sharp shooter although," he paused for breath, totally oblivious to George's expression of childlike wonder as the man in front of him seemingly pulled book after book out of the purple box, like several rabbits out of a magicians hat, "... who knows, you might be more of an axe guy. Are you more of an axe guy?"

"An axe guy?" George replied weakly, his mind still trying to process what was happening. The books in front of him were pulsating a strange aurora of colours... almost as if they were magic.

"Sure, you know, some people prefer using an axe to a sword, I can tell you the benefits of both if you like? Go on, ask me anything!"

George blinked twice, swallowing hard as he sought to find his somehow lost voice. "Who are you?" he managed to ask, watching as the man in front of him freeze for a second.

"I'm Skeppy. You know, Skeppy... Bad never mentioned me?" Skeppy looked uncertain, subtly putting the books back into the purple box.

"No..." George croaked out, feeling like he was going to throw up.

"... Bad never mentioned this place to you?" Skeppy packed the box away and placed it back into the black box. George watched him do it and still had no idea how it had managed to be done. It was almost as if it just... disappeared into thin air.

"... I just wanted to see what was in here..." George could feel a panic attack coming and tried to breath calmly, much to the dismay of Skeppy. Skeppy's expression could only be described as someone who had let out a terrible secret and was instantly regretting it, and wondering if he should just come out and say the rest of it.

"So.. you haven't died yet?"

George looked at him with a frown. Skeppy had asked it in such a way that it sounded like a perfectly reasonable query. "Of course, I haven't died, otherwise I wouldn't be alive and standing here" George replied, completely confused and a bit annoyed by the stupidity of the question. Skeppy laughed slightly.

"No, you see, actually, if you had died, you would be here, because then..." Skeppy trailed off, the penny suddenly dropping. "Wait... you haven't died yet? Ever?"

"What do you mean, 'ever'?" George asked, panicking and sitting down on the floor suddenly, head in his hands. This was getting too much. This was too weird. This was...

"George... did they never tell you about what happens after you die?" Skeppy's tone was completely different now, a sort of mix between disbelief and horror.

George had had enough. He had just wanted to know how to craft a stone pickaxe. He had just wanted to know how to craft a stone pickaxe, he had just...

As George pulled himself off the floor, Skeppy was also visibly panicking.

"Oh no, oh no, no, what's Bad going to say, he's going to kill me! And then probably kill me again... and cast me out... shit... SHIT..." Skeppy reached over the counter and grabbed George frantically by the shoulders. "I won't say anything if you don't, please, George, you have no idea, I like living here, please don't tell Bad I told yo-"

"I have to go. I won't say anything." George heard his voice say as his legs carried him out of the shop, running and racing and pushing past random people. He suddenly came out of his panicked state when he realised he had somehow managed to navigate his way back to the door to his room. He took a shuddery breath and walked in.

Bad was sitting on the bed, facing away from him. Before George even had time to process, Bad spoke, hurt evident in his voice.

"That wasn't funny George. I spent ages looking for you, I check the map, and it says you're heading back here, but not from the direction of the library. Not cool." Bad turned to face George, a lecture brewing, but instantly stopped when he saw the state of a wobbling George, clearly unwell.

"George, what the hell happened to you?!" Bad rushed up to George, pulling him onto the bed before squatting down on the floor to his eye level. It looked like Bad wanted nothing more than to

hug George, but was restraining himself.

George gulped. There was so much he wanted to say. So many questions. He was so scared. He didn't know what was happening. Looking into Bad's eyes made him want to not question anything, seeing the real concern and care for him there.

"I ate something bad. I'm not sure what..." George managed to mumble out, realising how wrong it was that Bad bought his story instantly. Bad reached up into the air, as if to grab something, but then paused.

"Hang on..." Bad said quickly, running out of the room. Moments later he returned, a pink glass bottle in his hand.

"What's..." George started before Bad thrust it at him.

"Drink this. Now." Bad said urgently, and George had no choice but to drink it. It made him feel tingly and light for a moment, and he felt a rush of strength wash over him. How had Bad managed to find the medicine so quickly?

"Thanks, I feel better now." George spoke softly, as normally as he could. Bad breathed a sigh of relief.

"Don't go eating anything you don't recognise, okay? We have nice steak for a reason." Bad joked and George managed a feeble smile.

"Bad... what happens after we die?" George watched as Bad's expression turned from shock, to fear, and then to no emotion at all. George felt his heart sank. Something was wrong. Bad knew something and wasn't telling him and it was something very, very, wrong.

"Why the question?" Bad asked carefully, and George's tattered mind remembered what Skeppy had pleaded to him as he had left.

"I just don't want to get ill again..." he said, turning his face to avoid Bad's gaze. He heard Bad sigh, almost in relief.

"You're not going to die George. There is nothing here that could possibly harm you." Bad smiled at George as he stood up, rubbing the backs of his legs.

"I have that present for you... I would leave it until morning but I think you'll like it. If you're up for it?" George nodded and stood up from the bed, following Bad down to the dining room.

"Ta-dahhh~" Bad sang, as he watched George's mouth fall open in shock at the armour stand in front of him, covered in a full set of iron armour. George forgot everything momentarily as he walked towards it impulsively, running his hands and feeling the cold metal under his fingers. He turned to Bad, excitedly.

"This... this is mine?" George asked hopefully, not daring to be happy until Bad confirmed it. Bad wore a grin that stretched from ear to ear.

"It was Saps' idea. He said it was something I could get you that you would truly love and... well, I wanted to make you happy." George missed the slightly blush that crept over Bad's face as he said that, which had vanished by the time George had turned around from looking over every angle of the armour. He turned to Bad, but suddenly froze as he noticed something.

"Your armour is shining." George now recognised the slightly pulsating glow around Bad's

armour. He had just assumed all armour was like that, but looking at his on the stand, it seemed duller in comparison. Bad cursed slightly under his breath and George's eyes widened. That reaction had seemed so genuine... could it be...?

"I was hoping you wouldn't notice; yours is an older set. We can't really spare the resources at the moment for a new one. I'll have it shined up in a day or two, when I get around to it." Bad then ushered George back to his room, nervously chattering about how there would have to be a deep mining session soon because iron was just such a useful resource for everything, and the George could have a nice new shiny set. George followed the conversation mutely.

"Well... goodnight George! Get some rest, okay?" Bad said affectionately as George wandered back into his room.

"Night Bad..." George managed to get out a smile before closing the door in Bad's face. He barely noticed his rudeness and went straight into his bed, staring up at the ceiling. His thoughts were all tangled and he desperately tried to make it out in his head. It didn't work.

"A crazy guy called Skeppy, who can apparently do magic, thought I had died, and therefore been sent to him by Bad, to get some glowing books, and I might be an axe guy." George breathed his day into the air, hoping it would make more sense out loud. It didn't.

George's heart was racing as he eyed the window, hoping some fresh air would help. He opened it up and looked out at the lights of the down, the moon illuminating the shapes of the building. From here he could just about make out where the bookshop was. He looked down and noted how high from the ground his room was. He would die if he were to fall out, from this height.

George stared at the ground, eyebrows furrowed. He pulled himself up onto the windowsill, never breaking eye contact with the ground.

"This is crazy. I'm crazy." He whispered to himself, terrified. There was no denying it; from this height, he wouldn't just break a few bones, he would surely die. He would have to. But according to Skeppy... maybe dying wasn't such a bad thing?

George let out a shaky breath and broke eye contact with ground, suddenly realising what he was considering.

"Nope, nope, I'm not doing this, no way, not worth it..." George muttered furiously to himself as he turned to climb back into his window.

It was at precisely at that moment George's skill of strategic jumping with intentional loss of footing, unintentionally kicked in.

George saw himself hurtling towards the ground, almost in slow motion as he fell, picking up speed as he approached the grass below.

"I never learnt how to make a pickaxe" he thought numbly as he closed his eyes for impact.

Do you remember, George?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"George? George! Wake up you muffin head!"

George stirred for a moment, stretching his body out like a cat first before he opened his eyes, unsure of what he was going to see. He was reassured to see Sapnap peering down at him and a split second later, Bad walking out from behind him into view, who looked equally relieved.

"Okay, in the nicest respect George, you're an idiot and we're putting bars on your window." Sapnap half joked, as George glanced over at his window and was happy to see it wasn't covered in bars... yet.

"Seriously George, how did you even fit through that window... its tiny..." Bad smiled before continuing "...then again, you're kind of small I guess."

George suddenly remembered the feeling of the wind rushing past his face the previous night and sat up suddenly, causing Bad and Sap to lean back in shock at his unexpected movement.

"What happened? Am I dead?" He asked, dumfounded and confused, checking himself over for any injuries and finding nothing. Sap and Bad exchanged looks before Sap replied slowly.

"George, you fell out of your window. You should have died. Luckily those slime blocks were there, right? You just bounced up and then I caught you. You are so lucky I was walking by at that exact moment." Bad nodded vigorously in affirmation as Sap smiled.

"Seriously, you're lucky Sap was there George, you could have been really hurt." Bad and Sap watched anxiously as George frowned.

"But... but I remember hitting the ground..." he tried to argue before Sap cut him off.

"No, you hit the slime. You bounced and I caught you. We then gave you some medicine whilst you were sleeping and now, you're fine." Saps voice was so sure and firm and George was struck with the idea that it almost sounded rehearsed.

"There wasn't any slime Sap." George raised his voice slightly louder than his usual tone, fed up of being told things. "I fell. I must have really badly hurt myself." George tried to picture the ground but his mind was going blank at the details. He would have noticed there was slime blocks, surely?

"No George, there was slime, it was an easy fix, you didn't bruise, you bounced." Saps voice was also raised now, and Bad edged backwards away from the pair as they looked at each other with narrowed eyes.

"There wasn't slime because funnily enough, I could see the grass as it was approaching my face!" George shouted, rising to his feet, overly defensive.

"And I'm telling you, there was slime - you're confused, they're pretty much the same colour!" Sap snapped and Bad looked between, wondering if he should step in.

George, visibly fuming, let the confusion and anger he felt poison his words as he spat out at the

pair of them: "I slipped, I remember falling, and I remember hitting the grassy ground, not slime, not water, not wood, the ground. I remember it all being over, I heard..." George paused for breath, searching for the words. What had he heard? "...twinkling."

Bad and Saps eyes widened as George puffed his chest out. "Yes, twinkling." George confirmed stubbornly, crossing his arms sulkily.

The three of them stood in silence for a moment, letting George's final words hang in the air, before all three of them burst out laughing, George helplessly joining in. Sap howled as Bad wiped away tears, wheezing,

"I am so sorry George, I swear I was trying to be supportive, but the way you said twinkling..." Bad started wheezing again and even George could see how it must have looked, him angrily saying the word twice. George completely forgot his rage and instead opted for sighing, half in play annoyance, half genuine.

"I'm going mad, aren't I?" George asked depressingly, and Sap and Bad squeezed him in-between them for a group hug.

"You're not George, you just had a nasty fall. Just... believe us, okay? Trust us, we know what we're talking about."

George looked at his two best friends and smiled. "Guess I am an idiot..." he mumbled sheepishly, as he was crushed in the George sandwich.

"Yup. Honestly... what are we going to do with you, hm?" Bad patted George's head as he left the room, Sapnap closely following behind.

"Take it easy today George." Sap and Bad both left and George climbed back into bed, staring at small, opened window.

"Sap, we have to tell him." Bad whispered quietly as they made their way outside the stone perimeter. There was no possible way George could hear them from here, outside the gates, but Bad didn't trust himself to speak any louder.

"We agreed it was in George's interest that he doesn't know. And even if we told him, at this point, he'd never forgive us. Who knows how he'd react?" Sap looked out onto the fields of wheat and carrots ahead of him, eyes filled with sadness. "We have such a happy life here with him. I don't want that to change."

They stood in silence for a while, watching the wind blow through the crops and listening to the distant sound of cattle. Sap hesitated before trying to strike up conversation. "It's such a relief... I am so glad he doesn't remember last night."

Bad rounded on Sapnap, despite knowing he should also be grateful. "Never say that. Don't you remember what he was like when we found him all those years ago?!" They both fell silent as Bad allowed tears to trickle down his face at the memory; he wiped them away, his heart felling like it was being clenched tightly. He heard the undead moans in his mind's eye, the frantic chink of metal against stone, George's screams calling out for help again and again, slowly becoming high pitched screams as the two of them failed to reach him...

Bad shook his head as if they could stop the painful memories. "I think he could handle it..." Bad muttered, looking away as Sapnap slowly faced him with an eyebrow raised.

"Because that's something George could handle." Sap responded sarcastically. "Let's see how that would play out, shall we?"

Sap put on a mock voice with feigned cheerfulness. "Oh, hi George, glad you're feeling better, funny thing we completely forgot to tell you; every time you die, you lose a bit of your memory and a few years ago, get this, Bad and I screwed up so badly with protecting you we... you lost..."

Sap turned back to watch the calm picturesque view in front of him, trying to hold back his own tears as a lump formed in his throat, stopping him from continuing.

"But... he forgot about you two... and I want to tell him, I don't want to pretend anymore, especially now I..." Bad tried to reason desperately, wanting Sap to turn around and reassure him, give him some small hope that now was a time they could finally fix this. Sap turned back with his own tears falling down his face.

"Bad... he didn't just forget about you and me. He forgot about himself. He can't ever know. It would destroy him if he knew what happened to him."

The pair of friends looked out onto the beautiful landscape ahead of them one last time before heading back into the strong, safe walls of the town, which they had orchestrated and created entirely for their naive and precious lost friend.

That night, George dreamed of little orbs of light flying around him, a mixture of bright and murky yellows in the paved moonlight. They seemingly flew out from his body and circled him, George desperately trying to reach out and grab them but finding himself unable to move, lying on the grass on his side, his body jutting out at an odd angle.

He could do nothing but wait, and watch as the world got brighter as the sun began to rise. He had no idea how long he was there, unable to move. He didn't really care. It was a weird dream. All the while, the orbs kept him company, so he didn't feel alone. They twinkled prettily at him, swimming in and out of his vision, making comforting soft sounds of different pitches.

George waited and watched until eventually Sap and Bad approached, jogging into his vision. The orbs flew from his body over to them, skirting around them before being absorbed. George wanted to tell the bright lights to come back, but he couldn't speak. He felt weakened without them.

"What... the... muffin? How did he manage that?!" Bad questioned, staring between the window above him and George whilst shaking his head, as Sap knelt next to George. Bad started picking up various items around him, some which George recognised as his own, some he didn't. Bad walked out of George's vision, seemingly continuing to pick things up. Sap looked at him closely, his eyes quickly examining him with a hint of desperation.

"It's just a fall. It'll barely affect him." Sap concluded with relief, and Bad clicked his tongue in response, looking doubtful.

"Will he remember falling? It's been so long since he died..." Bad asked quietly as Sap shrugged, trying to hide his worry.

"Honestly, it's been so long, it's impossible to tell. Let's just say he fell on some slime or something, in case he does remember falling. I'll wait by his bed." *Bad nodded in agreement, leaning down to George as Sap got up. George could do nothing but watch as Sap turned away from him for a moment before looking up at the window. George noticed he was holding a dark green shiny sphere in his hand.*

Sap squinted at the window out of George's vision and took a step back, raising his arm behind him, aiming carefully. He threw the ball into the air and it sailed through the opened window. He looked at George for a moment, looking wistfully at the pair of them for a moment... and then he simply vanished.

"George, you're just asleep. It's okay. Wake up. Come on. Wake up." *Bad paused for a moment before gently brushing some of George's hair off his face, voice lowered but still loud enough for George to hear. George watched as he impossibly pulled out of the air an identical green sphere to the one Sapnap had just thrown; as if he was simply plucking a flower from a field. Bad looked between George and seemingly eyed up the window above them, before continuing to speak to George.*

"George? George! Wake up you muffin head!"

George woke up in a pool of sweat, panting as the realisation washed over him. That dream had been real. He *had* died. And then... then he had lived.

Chapter End Notes

Welp.

Thanks for the continued support and kudos; I'm glad so many of you are enjoying reading this!

Hope you enjoyed the chapter :)

It's Time to Party

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Bad had managed to disarm and defeat some hostile people from another village, and the whole town had gone mad with gratitude. Everyone had had the same unique idea all at once: *let's throw a party*.

It had been weeks since George had discovered he was immortal. He had so many questions; was he the only one? How long had Bad and Sap known? What else weren't they telling him? He had diligently played the part of pretending nothing was different, and had found himself caring less and less about getting answers. Sapnap and Bad were spending quality, amazing, fun time with him, and crazy exciting things like this evening kept distracting him from thinking about it further. He was just happy he wasn't dead for real.

George smiled widely as he reached the scene in front of him; even though the sun had almost set, it was as if everyone had forgotten the time and the threat of the night. The whole population of the town were crammed into the square, and there were pop up stalls giving away free stock of their trades. Iron golems seemed to be parked at each alley entrance, keeping an eye out for trouble and firmly refusing entry to the children trying to sneak in.

In the centre, music blocks were wrapped around a red powered wire, and redstone lamps blared on and off in time with the music. The real centrepiece was the dolphin fountain though. George had no idea how they'd done it, but they had managed to erect a beam of light shooting into the heavens from the dolphins mouth, and every now and then it would change a different colour from white, to yellow, to green...

It was a hell of a party.

From what he could tell, he could see no sign of Sapnap or Bad; although to be fair, the way everyone was jumping up and down and dancing to the music made it look like they were jumping almost impossible heights, and George could barely see the other side of the square. George knew there was a good chance of them being in the squashed jumble of bodies before him though. There was no way they'd miss something like this.

George struggled to have both feet on the ground at one time as he waded his way through, being bounced around mercilessly by the people around him. It wasn't that he was small; he considered himself average height. It's just everyone else was slightly taller than him and above average. George quickly realised that whatever direction he was trying to head in, he was never going to succeed, and half amusedly let himself be pushed out of the crowd of dancing people, opting to head around the outside instead.

Having to shout thanks to be heard over the booming music boxes at the base of the fountain, carrying as much as he could as people hurled objects at him to have, he finally spotted a familiar tuft of hair at one of the food stands. He strategically navigated his way over and squeezed inbetween a villager and Sapnap whilst dropping everything he was holding. Sapnap turned to him in delight, sprouting a beautiful shade of rosy cheeks.

"GEORGE" he yelled, happily reaching out to hug him and narrowly avoiding missing George

completely. He gave a little wobble and George burst out laughing, noting that even though the music was a lot quieter in this corner, Sapnap hadn't seemed to notice the need to stop shouting.

Sapnap, undeterred by George's laughter, continued "George, Geooooorge. George. Have you seen this. Have. You. Seen. This." Sapnap proceeded to shove a bowl of steaming soup under George's nose, looking between the soup and George to watch his reaction.

George feigned enthusiasm as he managed to get out between laughter "Yes, I have, it's a very nice soup!" George forced his face to remain neutral as Sap beamed at him before cupping the bowl in both hands and noisily slurping half of it in one go.

"It's so warm George. It's like... it's like if it had little tiny warm hands and arms right now, it could give you a hug, they would hug you so much. And, AND," he continued, looking down at his stomach as George continued to watch in amusement, "...it was also hugging you... on the inside."

George couldn't help but cry of laughter as Sap patted his stomach to illustrate where the hug was. George turned to the villager serving, who was watching the whole scene with apparent indifference and despair. Judging from the empty bowls stacked in front of Sap, the villager was fighting a losing battle.

"What is in that soup?" George asked curiously, watching as the villager shrugged before Sap pulled George close to whisper in his ear.

"IT'S A SECRET" he bellowed, George tactfully retreating to nurse his ear from the direct attack on his eardrum. Sapnap gulped down the rest of the soup and let out a hearty belch, a large amount of hot steam billowing out of his mouth against the cold evening air.

"Sap, that's disgusting!" George yelled in mock disapproval as Sap turned to him with wide eyes.

"George?"

"What, Sap?"

"... I'm a dragon."

George rolled his eyes whilst shaking his head at Saps humour, and turned away to scan the crowd.

"Where's Bad then?" he asked as Sap grabbed another bowl as the villager raised his hands in the air and walked off, clearly defeated by Saps endless appetite.

"Bad is where Bad shall always be... in the centre, being loved..." Sap turned to stare into his soup, smile suddenly gone from his face.

"... will Bad still love me if I'm a dragon George?"

"Okay, yeah, we're just going to grab that off you there..." George said firmly, taking the soup and moving it out of Saps reach as Sap stuck out his bottom lip.

"... imagine if you were a dragon George, you would be such a weird dragon... you'd fling people in the air instead of just shooting fireballs and ea-"

“OKAY, stay here Sap, I’m going to get Bad!” George turned to face the mosh pit, psyching himself up and taking a running start in.

“ASK HIM IF HE LOVES DRAGONS!!”

George grinned as he jumped his way towards the centre, following the sound of delighted bubbling laughter. He finally pushed his way into an inner ring and saw Bad doing what could only be described as a mixture between downward dog and a chicken dance. Whatever it was, he was pulling it off as people hooted and cheered around him. Bad looked up to see George and instantly broke into a shocked smile.

“Georgeeeeeeee! You made it to the centre!” he grabbed George’s hand and pulled him further into the ring, despite George’s protests. “George, you HAVE to watch this...”

Bad cleared his throat, cupping his hands to his mouth before screaming “HERO OF THE VILLAGE!” into the night.

Of one accord, all the surrounding villagers turned around, arms raised and responded “HERO OF THE VILLAGE!” and suddenly started chanting “Hero, hero, hero” in time to the beat. Bad lapped it all up, spinning around with his arms in the air, giggling in delight.

“Heroooo~” he half yelled, half sang as George tried to get his attention, shouting desperately.

“Bad, Sap needs you! He’s had a load of weird soup and...”

Bad stopped dead in his tracks, turning to George slowly, mouth open.

“Did that muffin head start without us? What the actual muffin. How dare he get a head start on me.”

Bad grabbed George’s hand and effortlessly danced his way through the crowd, calling over his shoulder “George, how much catching up do we have to do?”

Before George could respond, a wave of bodies slammed into them, forcing Bad to let go of George’s hand.

“Start without me!” George yelled as he was slowly separated from Bad. Bad raised his thumbs to signify he had heard before he disappeared from sight, George being pushed to the other side of the square.

George tried to catch his breath as he leant against a locked shop door, looking around him. Night had fully fallen and the stars were out, barely visible from the light pollution of the party. George had a brief thought of concern for all the livestock who were probably failing to sleep tonight.

An iron golem came up on his left, nodding its head slightly at him before turning its attention back to the party. George accepted a bucket of milk from a passing villager and polished it off thirstily, placing the empty bucket on the floor next to him. He started trying to get a bearing of his surroundings, squinting above him at a hanging sign to see what shop he was in front of.

Several things happened simultaneously.

1. Fireworks suddenly shot out of hidden dispensers all around the square as all the redstone lamps

and the beacon light went out, sending a mass of cracking fiery colours into the sky as midnight was reached.

2. The iron golem turned away from George as a bunch of children, sensing their opportunity, tried and failed to run past the iron golem, who effortlessly stretched out its arms and created an impassable blockade.

3. The door behind George suddenly opened and a hand covered his mouth as he was dragged backwards, his screams for help perfectly hidden by the extraordinary timing of the night.

Chapter End Notes

So I have been dying of hayfever today and was going to take a day off and write this tomorrow... but I kind of want to see all your reactions so please, let me know if you liked this chapter, leave a comment if you want and thanks, as always, for the support!

Also, we hit triple figures in the kudos and in the space of today got another quarter of the way to another hundred, which is INSANE, you guys are awesome and I'm so happy so many of you are enjoying this!! :)

Stay safe and see you in the next chapter!

The Truth

“George, it’s Skeppy, stop screaming!”

George blinked confusedly into the pitch-black room, pausing for a split second as Skeppy cautiously released him. Apart from one dimly lit lantern by the lectern beside them, the whole room was covered in darkness. George waited for his eyes to adjust as Skeppy looked out of the window, nervously.

“I don’t think anyone saw that... I’m sorry George, I saw a chance and I took it... I had to talk to you.”

George squinted at Skeppy’s figure, who was waiting for George to respond. George was slowly processing what was happening to him, and all the questions he had been suppressing suddenly came flooding into his mind. George had no idea which one was going to come out first as he opened his mouth.

“... I fell out of a window because of you!”

Skeppy tilted his head in confusion as George raised a finger to point at him, unable to keep the outrage out of his voice.

“You said all that stuff about dying, and I went to the window and got all confused, and then I slipped and I fell! I *died* by *falling*! What kind of death is that?!” George shouted accusingly, as Skeppy suddenly realised what George meant.

“Ohh, so that’s how you died. I mean, I saw you died, but I wasn’t sure if the timing was a coincidence or not...” Skeppy mused as George started to visibly fume.

“You saw me die?! You watched me climb out of a window and you did nothing?!?” George raged as Skeppy frantically shook his head, backing off slightly.

“No, no, I *saw* you had died. In the book. That’s what I wanted to talk to you about.” Skeppy motioned over to the lectern between them as George glanced over angrily, seeing a thick, open book on the table. He spared it a glance before turning his hardened gaze back onto Skeppy.

“Can you stop speaking nonsense and get to the point?” George snapped wearily. He had no time for riddles right now. Skeppy looked put out, appearing slightly impatient for the first time.

“It’s not nonsense, it’s fact. You’ve just forgotten it. Here...” Skeppy continued, flicking to the end of the book. He turned to the final page of the book and stabbed at some of the writing scribbled there with his finger. “There, you see?”

George cautiously approached the book and looked closer. The book looked plain enough, innocently presented on its pedestal, waiting to be read. Even in the flickering lantern light, he could still make out the series of words sprawled over them:

GeorgeNotFound fell from a high place.

George stared at the words, puzzled.

“Why does it say that I'm ‘not found’?” he managed to hiss at Skeppy, who merely shrugged it off.

“I don’t know, but that’s your full name.”

"My... name?" George’s mind was blown at the concept of ‘George’ being a nickname, or even a first name. As another blast of fireworks set off with a loud cheer from outside, Skeppy cast a glance at the window, worried.

“How did I not know that...?” George asked himself quietly, oblivious to Skeppy casting him a sympathetic look. Outside there was a louder cheer, causing Skeppy and George to look up.

“Keep going through the book, backwards” Skeppy ordered as he positioned himself in the darkened corner as the villagers continue to celebrate outside, keeping watch.

George, bewildered, turned back the pages slowly, noting that his name had only come up once, the pages filled with rare deaths and the odd achievement. He flicked through, briefly stopping as notable occurrences caught his eye.

BadBoyHalo has just earned the achievement [DIAMONDS]

Sapnap has just earned the achievement [Enchanter]

BadBoyHalo was slain by Skeleton.

Sapnap has just earned the achievement [DIAMONDS]

Sapnap was slain by Spider.

Skeppy has made the advancement [Cover Me With Diamonds]

Skeppy briefly left his post and nudged George out of the way, pausing for a split second to consider George. George thought he almost saw a look of sadness wash over his face before Skeppy skipped back through chunks of the book at a time. He reached a certain page and stopped to look at George uncertainly.

“George...” he began, hesitantly. “George, when you came to me a few weeks back, saying you’d never died, I was confused. I thought you were joking at first, but then I realised your memory loss was so severe something must have happened. So, I checked the book and...” Skeppy trailed off, his hand hesitating on turning back one more page.

George reached out to turn it but Skeppy grabbed his hand, preventing him, looking at him seriously.

“George, if you turn this page, you’ll know the truth. You’ll know what happened to you. And I will be here to answer any questions you may have. But you have a choice. You can walk out of here and live life as you have been doing, in bliss. It's up to you.”

Skeppy watched as George considered what he said, before quietly adding almost as an after-thought "... if I was in your position, I'd want a choice."

George thought about his life, how wonderful and mostly happy he was. How life was finally coming together in a way he could be content with forever, with his two best friends who he loved more than anything in the world. And yet...

Was it better to live a lie?

That's what he'd been living... surely it was better to know the truth, and then make a decision? How bad could it be?

George silently nodded and Skeppy swallowed nervously, stepping back and letting go of George. His expression was unreadable.

"I'm so sorry this happened to you..." he said quietly as George turned the page back. George's eyes widened and his blood ran cold.

"No..." he whispered in horror, turning back another page, and another page, wanting the words to change, wanting the words to stop. But there they were, printed line after line, again and again, and George felt each word as if it were a fatal stab to the chest:

GeorgeNotFound was slain by Zombie

GeorgeNotFound was slain by Zombie

GeorgeNotFound was slain by Zombie

GeorgeNotFound was slain by Zombie

GeorgeNotFound was slain by Zombie

GeorgeNotFound was slain by Zombie

GeorgeNotFound was slain by Zombie

GeorgeNotFound was slain by Zombie

GeorgeNotFound was slain by Zombie

GeorgeNotFound was slain by Zombie

GeorgeNotFound was slain by Zombie

GeorgeNotFound was slain by Zombie

GeorgeNotFound was slain by Zombie

GeorgeNotFound was slain by Zombie

GeorgeNotFound was slain by Zombie...

On and on it went for page after page, a never-ending stream of death. George felt as if his stomach had fallen through the floor as he kept flicking back through time at what had happened to him again and again. Eventually, the words finally changed, looking small and insignificant as it ironically stated:

GeorgeNotFound has made the advancement [Monster Hunter].

Go forth and learn!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Tell me everything you know.”

For the first time in George’s life, or rather, the life he knew so far, he wasn’t panicking when faced with a problem. Finally, all those moments of doubt and uncertainty and confusion were making sense. He wasn’t an idiot, or couldn’t handle all those things Sap and Bad had warned him about. He just couldn’t remember a time when he could, and how to process it.

But he could learn.

George looked at Skeppy, who seemed surprised at how calm George was. George repeated “Tell me everything you know” and Skeppy placed a hand to his face, lost in thought.

“Well, I don’t know what you don’t know... how about I ask some questions? I don’t want to overwhelm you...” Skeppy said thoughtfully, trying to be considerate.

“Any more than finding out you suffered such bad trauma in your past you forgot everything you ever knew?” George asked sarcastically as Skeppy visibly flinched.

“...Touché.”

Skeppy sighed, thinking where to start. The book caught his eye.

“Okay, do you know what this is?” He motioned to the book and George hesitated before responding.

“It’s a book that lists everything that happens to us?” George guessed, Skeppy’s scrunched facial reaction neither confirming nor denying.

“Well... yes, and no. It lists notable occasions, when we achieve something for the first time. It also records our deaths. Whenever you set up a place of residence, this,” Skeppy patted the book fondly, “appears in your inventory.”

George frowned. “Inventory?” George questioned. Skeppy’s mouth dropped open.

“You don’t know about your inventory? How have you been transporting items?” Skeppy asked indignantly, looking horrified.

“I’ve been carrying them, like a normal person!”

Skeppy was horrified. “Physically?! With your hands?!” he questioned in disbelief.

Skeppy hastily backtracked as he saw that George’s mind was about to be blown. He’d had to be a bit gentler if George’s brain was to survive this.

“Okay, okay... right, watch this, carefully. I promise, it’s not a trick or anything...”

George nodded, focussing on Skeppy's hand. Skeppy reached out into mid-air, closing his fist around the empty air. A split second later, he was holding a piece of steak, and offered it to George.

George's mouth dropped open. "Wha-" he asked, dumbfounded, as he accepted the steak. Skeppy spotted George's rucksack on his back, an idea coming to him.

"Imagine you have a backpack in front of you, but it's bigger on the inside. You can put up to 36 different types of item in your rucksack, but if you wanted any one of those at any point, you could reach in and just pull it out. Got that?" George nodded slowly, trying to concentrate, as Skeppy continued.

"Now imagine that rucksack is invisible and floating around you at all times. And that whenever you reach out to grab something, the rucksack moves so you're reaching into it." Skeppy demonstrated reaching out his hand, and drew an apple out of the air. He then reached out with his other hand in a different direction and plucked out an iron glowing pickaxe. George absentmindedly munched on the steak, processing everything in wonder as if a small child at a funfair.

"If I want to put them back..." he continued, motioning as if he were hanging them up in the air, "...you just picture putting back them away again." As he spoke, the objects in question vanished from sight, validating what he had said.

"Eventually, you get to the point where it becomes second nature and you wouldn't even have to picture a rucksack. But that's the best way I can think to describe it." Skeppy finished triumphantly, pleased with his explanation. He turned to George and waited for his reaction.

"So... how do you do it?"

Skeppy's frowned. "No..." he flatly said as George looked at him with hopeful eyes.

"You could teach me Skeppy!" George asked excitedly, sitting up straight as he finished off the steak. George's shoulders sank as Skeppy shook his head.

"George... I just wanted you to know the truth. No one should have to live in that kind of darkness. I'm not going to teach you." Skeppy's tone was of utter seriousness, and George knew there was no persuading him.

"Then... then how do I learn?" George was desperate – he had just discovered he had lost all his memories and now he was learning that he had some kind of magical ability to store items in a hidden floating invisible vault. He still didn't understand it entirely, but he knew enough that it would be a useful skill to learn.

"You talk to Bad and Sap. I can't help you any more than I have. Besides, I..." Skeppy paused, looking around the bookshop sadly, "...I am going to leave the town. Today."

"What? But you can't!" George protested frantically as Skeppy looked at him with a kind smile.

"It was a nice life here, but there is no way Bad and Sap will forgive me for telling you the truth. I'd rather leave with our friendship intact."

George couldn't shake the guilt that was settling in his stomach. Skeppy spotted this and hastily added "I'll come back one day, don't worry, but... I need to go out there and start a new life again. Honestly, it's all got a bit too familiar for me here." Skeppy raised a hand as George began to object again.

"George, you don't even know me, so there's no need to feel bad. I don't think you ever really will. Maybe one day, we'll meet again and we'll be good friends. For now..." Skeppy quickly hopped over the counter, drawing out the purple box out of the smaller black one like he had all those weeks ago.

Skeppy quickly placed it in front of George. "In here are all the enchantments you'll ever need. And in here..." he mumbled, pulling out another purple box, "are a load of basic resources, some food, some ingots, just general things. Keep them on your person at all times."

George shook his head, sceptical. "I can't do that, they'll never fit..." George pulled out his backpack off his bag as Skeppy sighed impatiently.

"George, that's just a bit of leather thrown together. I think Bad and Sap made it for you, as a way you could cope with putting things in your inventory. Have you ever put anything in there that realistically just couldn't fit, with everything else already in it?"

George thought about how he had put the pickaxe in the bag by the fountain, Bad failing to see it. He just assumed Bad hadn't been looking properly. But now...

George took one of the boxes, and tried shoving it into his rucksack. The leather caught at the sides and barely covered a corner. George shook his head dejectedly.

"I can't do it..." he said quietly. Was this his life? Being told about these things he should be able to do and not being able to do them? Skeppy rolled his eyes, giving in as he gently tried to help.

"Close your eyes. Don't hold onto the rucksack, just... just imagine dropping it inside." Skeppy commanded, fingers crossed behind his back.

George took a deep breath before scrunching his eyes shut. His rucksack was right below him. He could drop the box into it. The box would fall and the bag would swallow it up. The box would fall in and he'd be able to take it out again.

George paused and let the box drop, wincing in advance as he waited for the sound of the box to hit the bag.

It never arrived.

"You did it George!" Skeppy exclaimed delightedly as George squinted an eye open, looking around and seeing no trace of the box.

"Okay, do it again, with this one. Quickly!" Skeppy urged as sunlight began to trickle into the shop. George nodded, determined and full of confidence as he closed his eyes once more. After a moment, he dropped the box, picturing it falling safely into the rucksack.

When he opened his eyes, he saw that Skeppy was holding his rucksack, grinning cheekily.

"Congratulations, you just put that in your inventory, without the rucksack. But I'd keep using the

rucksack whilst you get used to the concept.” He tossed the bag back at George, who couldn’t help match his grin as he caught it.

“Thank you.” George said, saying it full of meaning and honesty. Skeppy smiled, happily.

“I think you have some questions to ask Bad and Sap now. Be kind to them George... they just wanted to keep you safe after all.” Skeppy shooed George out of the front door as George turned around.

“Why did you do all this?” George asked just before Skeppy closed the door behind him. Skeppy paused, considering.

“I don’t know... I’ve wanted an excuse to leave for a while. Maybe I’ll find another village. See what happens to 100 villagers when Skeppy is introduced in their lives.” He looked at George dead in the eye before continuing “besides, you are an adventurer George, just like me, just like Bad and Sap. They may want to protect you... but I feel like you have a lot of potential in you. Not many people get the chance to start life again, right from the start.”

George nodded thoughtfully and stuck his hand out. Skeppy gladly shook it as George turned around, heading towards home where he knew Sapnap and Bad would be looking for him and would answer his questions, whether they liked it or not. He ignored the various stranglers from the party and the few taking down the various music blocks and red wiring. He wasn't helping them today. He needed to help himself.

He squared his shoulders firmly, chin held high as Skeppy called after him, a final message of confidence and support.

“Go find yourself George!”

Chapter End Notes

We're up to 188 kudos guys, I am so overwhelmed by how many of you are enjoying this and where this story is going! :)

Keep leaving kudos (as it'd be amazing if we reached 200!) and comments; I try to reply to them as they come through!

In the meantime, hope you enjoyed this chapter, stay safe, and enjoy the story being kicked off!! :)

Nether Doubt Yourself

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Dream was becoming more and more convinced that whatever he was looking for didn't exist.

He had gone to hell and back again and back into hell and he still hadn't come close to what he was looking for. He just knew it was in that dimension.

Quite literally hell.

How else could you describe it? Lakes of molten lava, waterfalls of the hot and deadly liquid oozing out of every unexpected nook and cranny. Half man, half pig creatures that roamed around as if they too, had forgotten why they were there.

Giant balls of gas solidified, that could shoot fireballs. With tentacles.

Dream was getting sick of being set on fire.

He was always hungry and always half-dead in here. Not that he couldn't handle it.

He was, after all, brilliant.

Dream jumped from edge to edge, placing blocks below him as he fell, constantly moving, consistently calculating his chances of survival in a blink of an eye. He spotted another of those rare, gleaming fortresses, a dark, deep purple and red, standing out against a sea of orange.

*He had searched so many chests in these forgotten landscapes, battled many a fiery demon or a cursed skeleton... even sliced and diced and diced again blobs of fiery jelly that **just. would. not. die.***

Dream forced himself to take a deep breath, placing blocks below him as he created a pathway over the lava. He was 2 blocks from the nether fortress when his ears pricked.

Of one movement he had drawn a bow in one hand, an arrow from the other, beautifully timed to come together as he jumped for the edge of the fortress, trusting his instinct that he would land on it as he twisted midair, letting go a blazing arrow that shot towards the giant figure of white.

The Ghast hadn't seen him, and never had a chance to.

With a mournful shriek it shrivelled and collapsed in on itself as it died, dropping glowing orbs and something else. Dream didn't have a chance to see as he landed hard, on his back, managing a backwards roll before straightening up, eyes warily looking around, alert, for the next monster that wanted to kill him.

Satisfied that there were no immediate threats, Dream took his shield out and placed a diamond sword in his right hand.

"You have to be in here..." he mumbled, trying to remain positive. He marched forward.

After what felt like hours, maybe even days, Dream forced himself to acknowledge that he had searched every chest and whilst there had been significant looting, he was no closer t-

Dream slipped off the top of the fortress and pelted towards his death below.

Without a moments thought, Dream reached out and took a block from mid-air, placing it below him. He grunted slightly as he slammed into the block... it was painful, but better than taking a dive into the lava and melting to death.

He quickly picked himself up, drinking a pink potion, before stacking blocks up to the top of the fortress. He reached the top and casually dusted himself off.

So. He had searched every chest and was no closer to findi-

Dream frowned, distracted once more as he looked into the distance, his heart suddenly racing for some reason. He felt a tightness in his chest as he looked at the impossible sight before him.

It wasn't what he was looking for, and true, it may have been an off-green from where has standing but...

Since when had forests grown in the Nether?

Chapter End Notes

The nether update came just in time...

Hold onto your hats because we have reached over 200 kudos and growing!!
Waaaaht?!

If you had told me that a week ago, when I wrote my first chapter, that we'd be here now with so many of you being supportive and complimentary and really enjoying this work, I wouldn't have believed it! <3

You're all awesome people :) keep looking after yourselves and enjoy an earlier than planned chapter of what Dream is currently up to in this story as a thank you for 200 kudos! (and get sufficiently hyped for the confrontation between George v.s. Sap and Bad in the next one...)

We're On the Move Again

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George hesitated, his hand clenched on the door handle, so tightly his knuckles shone out a faint white. He just had to open this simple, normal door, walk through it, and he would finally know everything.

He took a deep breath, letting it out shakily, and opened the door.

He could hear laughter coming from the kitchen as he gently shut the door behind him. It sounded like Sap and Bad were still having a good time, albeit a little less crazily than when he had left them.

Maybe I should have slammed the door. George thought about it for a moment, weighing up the dramatic intensity. He was angry, after all... right? He turned around and opened the door again, and slammed it shut. His nervousness made him push it a little harder than intended, and the whole house recoiled as it slammed shut, speaking a thousand words in one bang.

George winced, not just at the noise, but at the two shrieks that came from the kitchen. George poked his head around to survey the scene.

Sapnap and Bad were both clutching their chests, Sap seemingly having fallen onto the floor and Bad leaning over the counter.

“What the hell was that?!” Sap shouted at Bad, blaming him instantly.

“Um, I have been right here the whole time, how could it have been me?” Bad retorted, a slight quiver to his voice, still in shock.

George walked into the kitchen, trying not to feel too guilty as they spotted him. Sap, having a new target, turned on George.

“Oh, so that was you George?! That scared me so badly, what were you thinking?” Sap asked sulkily, picking himself up, wincing slightly.

“I don’t know, you tell me.” George answered, surprised at his own calmness and monotone. Sap and Bad both looked confused.

“George, is something wrong?” Bad asked as George refused to look at them.

“I don’t know, you tell me.” George mumbled again, repeating himself. It had worked well the first time but the second time was definitely less effective. Sap and Bad smiled at him, egging him on supportively.

“Well, whatever it is, you can tell us.” Bad walked over to George, putting a hand on his shoulder supportively. “It’ll all be okay, trust us, you can tell us anyt-“

SLAP

Bad stumbled back as Sapnap's mouth dropped open, not believing the red mark appearing on Bad's face. Bad touched a hand to the growing red patch, feeling the sting, still looking at George, who had a hand out-stretched in a fist. George wanted to put it down but he was frozen, a shaky hand in mid-air.

"What the muffin?" Bad said in disbelief as his bottom lip began to tremble. That was all it took for George to rush over, pulling Bad into a tight hug.

"Oh my god, Bad, I am so sorry, I didn't mean to..." George apologised profusely, refusing to let Bad go as Bad remained there, still stunned. Sap finally recovered enough to walk towards the pair, eyeing George up warily.

"What is going on George?" Sap demanded seriously, prying the pair apart and standing in-between the two, almost protectively of Bad. George noticed this and felt even more guilty.

"I... I know."

Sap and Bad exchanged puzzled glances before turning back to George.

"Seriously, how are we meant to know what you're tal-"

"I KNOW I DIED." George closed his eyes tightly, facing the ground, fists scrunched up. He missed Sap and Bad's reactions of pure shock and terror as George continued, blurting out word after word, needing to have them anywhere but festering inside of him.

"I know I'm meant to be cleverer. I know I'm meant to be able to craft like you two, I'm meant to be adventuring like you two, that I'm meant to know... *more*. I know you lose a bit of your memory every time you die and if you die over and over again in a short space of time..." George gulped, voice trembling as he pictured the words from the book, "...you can lose significant memories; days, months, years. I know I died. I know I died again and again from zombies and I lost who I was and I know that you two..."

George opened his eyes, tears falling from them as he looked at the two people he trusted in the world. He let his fists uncurl, shoulders slumped in defeat as he semi-collapsed onto the floor.

"I know..." George continued weakly, every inch of him aching and feeling torn "...that you two never told me. I know you would have thought you had good reason not to trust me with this, but now I know... and I deserve the truth." George looked up with glistening eyes, his voice betraying the hurt he felt.

"Tell me the truth you two. Tell me how I died. Tell me how you looked at me in the eyes every day and lied to me about what I'm capable of, how you made me feel like there was something wrong with me for as long as I can remember." George stopped, unable to say more, unable to feel any more pain than he was currently experiencing.

Bad rushed over to George, who had neither the willpower or strength to stop Bad as he held onto George tightly, like if he let go George would disappear. An unwilling smile forming on Bad's lips, despite George's words.

"We wanted to tell you for so long George... but we just didn't know how to." Sap joined the two on the floor, forcing George's chin up to make eye contact.

“We failed you George. When we finally found you... you’d even forgotten who we were. We had to pretend we had just met and start all over again. It was a really difficult decision...” Sap started, trailing off, knowing that there was no way to justify the lies for so long, but trying anyway.

“You just weren’t ready to hear it then. And we never knew when to tell you and we never let anything bad happen to you and then years went by and before we knew it, you were happy and risk-free not knowing” Bad picked up as George wiped his face with his sleeve, noticing they had avoided the main question.

“So how did I die?”

Sapnap paused, uncertain, looking at Bad for confirmation.

“Let me.” Bad said to Sapnap, momentarily ignoring George. Sapnap shook his head.

“That’s not fair on you Bad, we were both there.”

“I was closer.”

George was on the edge. “Someone just tell me!” he demanded despairingly, looking between the two.

Bad nodded solemnly. “George...” he began.

“You fell into our zombie farm.” Sap cut across, Bad glancing across in a mixture of anger and relief.

George tilted his head, confused. “A zombie... farm? What, so you just, grew zombies?” George’s eyes widened as he suddenly looked repulsed. “Wait, are you telling me you were letting zombies infect people and farming them or something?!”

“What the muffin, no, George, come on!” Bad said quickly, disgusted, “we found a spawner and we had turned it into an experience farm.”

“What’s a spawner? And experience?” George questioned. Bad and Sap sighed.

“There is so much you don’t know George...” Bad said sadly, trying to think of how to explain.

George narrowed his eyes. “Wow, I wonder why that is.” Bad looked away from George’s glare, unable to argue.

“A spawner is like a cage that has a soul stuck inside. In this case, a zombie soul.” Sap quickly took over, wincing as George’s glare turned onto him. “When you kill a zombie, it can occasionally drop useful material, but it also drops experience – these sort of glowing orbs, which are really useful for-“

“I’ve seen those – they came out of me when I fell out of the window.” George cut across, momentarily happy to be contributing to the conversation on something he knew about.

Bad nodded sadly, realising George did remember what had happened after he had fallen. “Yeah, you lose most of them when you die. If you keep dying, you lose all of them.” Bad chimed in,

seemingly feeling able to enter the conversation again as George's gaze softened slightly as his brows furrowed, concentrating.

"So, you were making all these zombies appear..."

"Spawn" Bad corrected, shutting up as Sap gave him an exasperated look at his needless correction.

"And you then were killing them for the orbs..."

"Experience. Okay, sorry, I just thought he should know the correct terms now!" Bad defended himself as Sapnap gave him another look.

"... so, what was I doing there?"

"We're not really too sure what happened, even to this day."

George's looked horrified and about to start asking more questions; Sap quickly continued.

"We think you must have dug straight down and fallen in accidentally. You should have been able to just mine your way out." Saps eyes glossed over slightly, lost in thought. "Maybe your pickaxe broke. Maybe your armour broke. We don't know. After a while we realised neither of us had seen you for a while so we checked a map we had at the time and on it we saw you were out in a field, so went looking for you."

Bad reached out for Sap, grabbing his hand tightly in support before continuing the story for him.

"We walked around the area for a while and we could just hear you in the distance... screaming. Screaming our names and other things we couldn't tell. We had no idea where you were; it never occurred to us that you were being killed so much. I thought you were just trapped in a cave with a few zombies and wanted some help. But the way you kept screaming as we dug around, trying to find you..."

Bad closed his eyes, unwillingly letting the memories float to his mind "...after a while, we got close enough to hear you screaming our names. Then you stopped screaming for us and just started screaming random words. Then you were simply screaming and then... you weren't."

George didn't know what to say as he watched Sap and Bad visibly crumble. He should have been feeling angry at them for keeping him in the dark for so long but watching them, George felt his anger unwittingly fade. He couldn't imagine how horrible it must have been.

"Eventually, we heard the zombies, and it suddenly clicked that you must have got in somehow. We mined straight to you and destroyed the spawner – at the time, there were too many of them and we just wanted to get to you safely, there was no time to light everywhere up. We hacked our way through until we found you, and you didn't recognise us. Or anything. You just knew that the zombies were bad."

"So, we took you up to the surface and you were so grateful and happy and... God, George, the way you saw the world. You saw it in such a beautiful way. And then you asked who we were and asked to stay with us because you weren't sure what to do now you had escaped... we just couldn't tell you." Sap's eyes shimmered brightly as he let go of Bad's hand.

"So... we started again, from scratch. We created a safe home for you, and eventually, as you got more confident and better, we expanded it, with wandering traders and travellers setting up shop in the early days. We made all this for you... so you would be happy. And so we'd never have to lose you again."

George didn't know what to say. He had a new tightness in his chest, but not from anger. George blinked in shock as he realised, he was terrified. All these things had happened to him... and he had no memory of the horror that was on Sap and Bad's faces. He was blissfully unaware of what it looked like, what it felt like to be down there, in that dark and dangerous place. And for Sap and Bad to do so much for him, just to keep him safe... could he be angry? Should he be?

"George, please say something." George realised he had been lost in thought, and Sap and Bad had been waiting patiently in fear at his response.

"... am I okay?" George asked, his voice coming out small and scared.

Bad and Sap managed to laugh slightly, an easy smile forming across their lips. "George, you are more than okay. You just forgot a few things, that's all."

"... so, you can teach me again?" George asked. Sap and Bad began to look at each other before George quickly added "actually no, you will teach me again. You're going to make up for not telling me for this long. We're going to go out adventuring together and you're going to show and teach me everything. Even things I didn't know back then. No holding back anymore."

George felt a swell of pride wash over him as he managed to speak boldly, full of certainty as Sap and Bad smiled weakly.

"Guess we don't have much choice..." Sap said defeatedly as Bad walked towards one of the chests. After rummaging inside, he pulled out a map which George recognised.

"But... you ripped that up! I heard you..." George objected to the sight of the map he had once stolen, and Bad managed a short laugh.

"Did you think I destroyed the only copy?" he lightly teased as he spread the map out onto the counter. Sap and George peered over at it.

The village was slightly north of the centre of the map; George recognised the overall structure and fields towards the front.

Further *North* lay a vast quantity of mountains, seemingly topped with snow.

To the *South*, a desert lay, with a small structure half visible poking out between waves of sand.

To the *West*, a vast, thick forest was spread off the corners of the map with a tiny grey patch visible, in the centre, almost looking like a ruin of something.

To the *East*, open fields and the ravine where George had journeyed all that while ago.

"You're sure about this? We'll gear you up, teach you on the move, and we'll go through this all... and this time, we'll do it together." Sap grinned earnestly at George, who nodded his head.

“I know I can do this.” George said, feeling an adrenaline rush charge through him that felt both new and familiar. Bad nodded and the three of them looked at each other, all three of them finally losing an unseen weight they had been carrying on their shoulders for years.

Bad saluted George, raising an eyebrow as he asked “Well, in that case...”

“Where do you want to go?”

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the wait guys, I was really struggling with this chapter as it's now at the point where the backstory has been set up and the main plot line can begin!! :O

Having said that, we hit 250+ kudos whilst I was writing this, and I wanted to make this chapter extra special for all of you reading it - not just because it's our first double digit chapter, but because everyone has been so wonderful and supportive... and 250 kudos on my first work is a massive thing for me! :)

So, I decided that I wanted your input on the story - on the map at the end of this chapter you have a few areas described; I'm going to give you guys a few days to comment below which area you want Sap / Bad / George to travel to. All of the areas have a specific plot in my head, and you can probably kind of guess from the description vaguely what they might encounter at each place :)

So, let me know through a comment below, keep hitting the kudos, and I'll give you all a few days before tallying up which place received the most votes before writing that chapter. (You may get another Dream update in the meantime whilst you're waiting...)

Thank you for your continued support, I am so happy you're all enjoying the story, you're all seriously amazing and as always, hope you enjoyed this chapter and keep safe out there!! :)

Go South! No, West!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George hesitated, eyes briefly flickering over to the East and North before hovering his hand over the map uncertainly, casting a shadow between the South and the West. He eyed up the sandy patches to the South. He had never seen a desert before... but then again...

"What's that?" George asked curiously, pointing towards the grey patch in the dense forest. Sapnap and Bad immediately leaned forward to get a closer look and consequentially banged their heads together.

"Ouch! Saaaaap!" Bad complained, rubbing his forehead as Sap did his best to shrug off the sting on the side of his head, examining the map.

"Hm... could be a temple ruin." Sap pondered, George's eyes lighting up.

"A temple ruin?" George asked in wonder. Bad perked up from caring for his bruised head.

"Yeah, they usually have booby traps and hidden treasure!" Bad and George hyped each other up, turning to Sap for approval.

Sap looked between the two, like a parent with two children on Christmas Eve, and rolled his eyes, sighing as he shook his head resignedly.

"Looks like we're going to the jungle then." Sap beamed as the pair celebrated before George tilted his head to one side.

"... what's the jungle like?"

"Okay, George, let's see it one more time, without the backpack."

Determined, George nodded seriously. He tossed his backpack to Sap as Bad spoke encouraging words.

"You've got this. One more time, just to be sure."

George took a deep breath, closing his eyes and reaching out in mid-air with his right hand. His fingers closed around the hilt of a sword and he pulled it out, whilst reaching out with his left hand and effortlessly placing it through the strips of a shield. He opened his eyes, breathing heavily as he triumphantly took a defensive stance. Bad and Sap broke into applause, cheering.

It had been yet another week since they had decided to head West - a very long week which seemed to have stretched itself thin. Supplies were needed, extra gear was needed, shulker boxes (the purple boxes George now could put a name to) had to be emptied and re-purposed. All the while, George had been practising accessing his inventory. He was fully packed and now really getting the hang of it, albeit he still preferred the mental aid of his rucksack. It just... made more sense than storing things in mid-air to him.

"Yes George!" Sap yelled as George looked at the sword in his hand uncertainly, feeling a little uncomfortable with the weight pulling his arm down slightly.

"You know, I still feel happier swinging with my left hand..." George said sulkily, unable to shake the feeling that it felt odd.

"And we've told you, shield goes in your off-hand, weapons in your main hand. It's the easiest and quickest way!"

"But it doesn't feel right!" George whined, earning him a laugh from Bad.

"Oh my days, George, you just swing it and hit something. You could do that with your foot with enough time!" Bad joked. George frowned but begrudgingly accepted the pair knew what they were talking about.

George turned to face Sap, outstretching his arm and motioning for him. "Can I have my backpack? I've kind of got used to it..." George admitted sheepishly, Sap nodding and tossing it back. George quickly took off the various equipment and stowed it into the bag, before Bad or Sap could tell him off for not putting it away 'properly'.

"So, what do you do if a monster attacks?" Sap asked seriously as George looked exasperated.

"Block with my shield, wait until either of you two appear, wait for openings and attack if need be." George chimed, the words forever lectured into his mind.

"And then you kill the little muffin right in it's tracks!" Bad burst out, quickly summoning his sword and sheild, demonstrating his skills against an imaginary enemey.

"Bad gets way too excited over successfully killing monsters..." Sap muttered to George, who stifled a laugh as Bad looked over suspiciously, frozen mi-swing.

"Oh, what are you two talking about now?" Bad questioned with narrowed eyes, Sap beckoning George to follow him to the stables, leaving Bad to defeat his disadvantaged invisible monster.

George couldn't help smiling as he walked into the stables. He had never been allowed in here before... well, as far as he could remember. There were various horses tied up to posts, who all eyed him up warily for a moment before relaxing once more. George thought he could even spot a donkey or two in the back quarter. That or there was a very confused horse somewhere.

George immediately climbed onto the horse nearest to him, settling himself on it comfortably. The horse didn't object like George half expected it to, and neighed almost in a content fashion. "You're a lovely one, aren't you?" George cooed, stroking the side of it's mane. The brown horse, with slightly lighter brown hair, whinied softly in response, behaving but seemingly a little confused.

It was at this moment Sapnap, after watching Bad finally make his way over, turned and saw this. He instantly ran up to George.

"Woah, woah, that's my horse George." Sap objected, George turning to him with a mischievous grin.

"I mean, it doesn't say it's your horse Sap..." George said innocently. Sapnap visibly tried not to over-react and took a deep breath.

"George, just trust me on this one, you don't want to go there." George opened his mouth to speak but Sap cut across him. "Ah but no. No. No George. No. You do not want to go there. Get your

butt off my horse."

George smiled wickedly, kicking the horse into a trot. "But I'm already on it..." he began before Sap barred his way.

"George. Off. The. Horse. Now." Sap semi-seriously punched George on the leg, almost hitting the horse.

"Alright, okay!! Gosh, calm down..." George laughed, quickly dismounting the horse. "You could have killed your own horse then!" George teased as he walked past Bad, who had mounted a horse and was watching with a small smirk.

"Wouldn't be the first time..." Bad said in an undertone, a hidden smile on his lips.

"What was that?" George asked, now mounted and directing the horse to trot over to join the other two.

"Nothing."

The three of them did a final check and then burst out into the rising sun, a little later than previously intended, but setting out on a journey nevertheless. The horses were very well trained, and seemed more than happy to endlessly sprint across the open fields, the air whistling slightly around them.

George hesitantly loosed the reigns slightly, relaxing as the horse continued to follow Sap and Bad, who were slightly in front of him. George closed his eyes, content. He had never felt this exhilarated before... he was so happy... so free.

---Oh Georgeee~---

George's eyes blinked open, looking ahead at the others.

"Did you say something?!" George called as Bad looked behind him.

"What?!"

George nudged his ankles against the horses underside, encouraging a chase in speed to pull up next to Bad.

"Did you call me?" George asked, Bad shaking his head.

"Maybe it's your destiny calling you" Bad teased as George laughed, looking around him as the world went by, enjoying every moment.

Maybe it was.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the delay in posting; it's been an absolute mad week and I just haven't had the time to sit down and type this out until now. :)

It was such a close call between the South and the West but, as of writing this, the

West won by one vote!

In the meantime, we've gone up to 338 Kudos! I am continuously blown away by the increasing figure, it's totally insane! Thank you all so much, I am so happy you're enjoying it and I hope you enjoy this chapter, which is very overdue!!

Like always, leave a kudos and a comment if you like, see you all in the next chapter, and stay safe and well! :)

Where destiny takes you

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

*Dream was completely shocked, to say this least. This was crazy. What the **hell** had happened here? Quite literally; what had happened to hell?*

Dream had only meant to briefly look at the strange places that had generated, but the more he saw, the more he was astounded. It was like this place, which he had become so used to knowing, being able to predict, to manage... suddenly, it was different. It was like someone had pulled a painted mask off and revealed a completely different, devilish beauty beneath it.

He subconsciously pulled at the edge of his own mask a little, smiling smugly to himself beneath it. He knew he was a devilish beauty.

There was a hidden attraction to the whole thing though, Dream had to admit. He had painstakingly waded through vast rivers of soul sand, only to become fed up and waste a handful of netherack racing over it, placing blocks before him as he raced along. He had sailed past dancing blue flames, found pillars of new strange blocks he discovered were called 'basalt', and had even wandered through the fossil of some unknown large creature before several ghouls had seen him on his way.

Thick ash had threatened to choke him as it drifted deceptively smoothly through the air - not for the first time, Dream was grateful for the protection of his mask.

Dream had travelled quite a distance away from his own portal leading to his castle, but he was finding he cared less and less about the place that was home. He knew he'd have to go back at some point, and had already carefully recorded the co-ordinates into his book with a quill and some bottled squid ink. Just... not quite yet.

*Besides, it wasn't as if he was in any desperate need to head back. Travelling light was Dream's moto. Whilst he saw the appeal to shulker boxes and rooms upon rooms of organised storage, and had happened to bring a shulker box with him, he didn't care much for it personally. Yes, he had invested in that once upon a time but the truth was, travelling with and using only what you needed forced you to think. It forced you to focus, to be clever, to survive. It forced you to travel and explore and **hunt**.*

And endless adventure... well, that was the only way to live.

Dream crouched, cautiously approaching the new area in front of him. It was similar to the place he had seen before, when he had noticed the first change to the nether. Dark spores were barely visible as they floated around a dark mist in front of him. Dream thoughtlessly reached out, selecting a potion of night vision from the air and swiftly drinking it. Instantly, the whole world lit up to a bright pink shade, Dream blinking for a moment to get used to the sudden brightness.

Walking along the warped nylium, Dream brushed through roots, sprouts, fungi... he was especially grateful for the shroomlight that was aiding in visibility. It was almost peaceful here, and Dream was half tempted to stay a while. He had becoming very familiar with this biome, probably because it was the first he had initially discovered.

Dream, however, was focussed on the reddish fog in the far, far off distance as he silently crouched

towards it, barely present to the mobs that, given enough distance, were peacefully roaming. He hadn't risked them spotting him yet and finding out if they were friendly. After long minutes of parkour and strategic block placement, Dream was inches away from the new biome. Yet something prevented him from immediately stepping over.

Dream paused as he sneaked to the edge. This place felt a little more dangerous than the other ones. Perhaps because it was such a distractingly dangerous singular colour. Red vines hung down, and there seemed to be constant aggressive grunts and strange squeals arising from its depths. Dark pulsating red bark grew a mass of nether wart blocks for leaves, growing off them... it was all so... red. A thick, **bloodthirsty** red.

"No... crimson." Dream whispered to himself decidedly as he examined some of the ground at his feet, knowing instantly as he held it that it was a crimson variant of the nylum he had seen before. Scanning before him, he could also see similarities in the plants that were growing. He noticed there were still small splashes of blue fungi around and almost felt relieved to see what had become a familiar sight to him in the other biome.

Dream crouched forward, keeping his wits about him. He kept seeing quick shadows in the edge of his vision but when he looked to check, they were gone. He felt particularly uneasy, a rare emotion compared to his usual self confidence. He didn't want to die here. After checking through his inventory, closing his eyes and picturing everything he had in there, Dream came to the conclusion it was probably a good idea to make a portal and head back into the overworld for some more food. He didn't want to lose the new blocks he had discovered and certainly didn't want to stop exploring at risk of starving to death.

Dream started placing blocks in the familiar shape he knew all so well. The obsidian used to have some weight to it, but Dream no longer noted it. He was one block away and had already equipped a flint and steel in his offhand when a mangled squeal came from behind him.

He turned quickly, putting away and instantly replacing in his hands a sword and shield as he made eye contact with the beast before him. Tuffs of steamed breath flew from it's nostrils as it shook its head from side to side slowly, suggesting the sharp tusks sprouting from its face were also fairly heavy. It was like a pig had gained muscle and tusks... and hair.

Dream calmly placed his shield away and drew out the final obsidian block. He would have a second to place it, then he had to simply light it and hold a defensive pose whilst he safely stepped into the portal. It would be easy.

Not for the first time, Dream's overconfidence became his downfall.

As soon as he turned he heard the beast charge as he placed down the last block in the correct place. He barely had time to turn with his shield as he blocked, the tusks charging into him and forcing him back. Dream dug his heel in, cursing as he was pushed backwards slightly. It was faster and stronger than it looked.

Dream grabbed his flint and steel from his inventory, trading it for his sword as he reached behind him, fumbling as he tried to light the portal without looking, somehow feeling his fingers on the surface and managing to strike a light. He barely had time to celebrate as the portal glowed behind him as he was forced against the structure. Dream drew a deep breath and waited for his moment. The monster drew its head up to strike, and that was when Dream made his move.

Dropping his flint and steel and summoning his sword, he darted around the shield, thrusting his sword towards the mad terrifying eyes. However, the warthog like creature veered off at the last second, causing Dream to only scrape along the side of it's face whilst it thrust a tusk into Dreams

arm. Dream yelled out in pain as he rolled away, his attacking arm searing with pain as the beast rounded on him, charging once more. Dream had no choice but to slam his shield into the ground, leaning against it for impact and support as the creature continuously slammed into it.

Without hesitation, Dream let the shield fall as he dropped it, jumping and summoning an axe in his left hand and bringing both the sword and axe down into the piglin's skull. It was ironic that Dream was finally close enough to know it was a hoglin just as it died, screeching in agony as it fell to one side, motionless. Dream, panting, congratulated himself as he knelt beside the deceased hoglin, for finding a new source of food. From what he could tell, they usually travelled in packs and had looked (and he could now confirm) too strong to take on as a group. He was just about to cut a slice of raw meat when he heard a small snort. He looked up and saw a baby hoglin watching him, head tilted in confusion.

"Oh come on..." Dream muttered to himself, pausing as the hoglin started to piece together what had happened. He didn't want to kill it if he could avoid it but h-

From behind the shadows, seven pairs of angry tusks hoglins made their way out and glared with fury at Dream. Dream paused, keeping eye contact and slowly backing up. His eyes flitted around, eyeing up his chances as they slowly started to corner him into the portal. Dream wasn't an idiot and knew this was a lost cause. He didn't have the health nor the hunger to outrun them right now. His only choice was to retreat.

As Dream stepped into the portal, the baby hoglin cried out and the other joined in the war cry, charging at the portal. Dream held his breath, hoping his usual luck would kick in and save him. He held his sword in his hand, ready. He needn't have worried; the portal swirled around him and enclosed him into its grasp, leaving the hoglins to roam peacefully, if not slightly confused, as they had done before.

Dream's head was reeling, as per, when he stepped out of the portal. Instantly lighting up his surroundings, he was surprised to see not only was he in a cave of some sort, but that a short distance in front of him, mossy cobblestone was growing on the ceiling. Eating the last of his food and healing up completely, Dream whipped up a chunky block staircase, pausing as he listened for any signs of mobs. It was eerily silent. Perhaps he had become too used to the loud roars of the nether. Dream broke the block just above him, ready to attack anything that fell down. Still no noise. Dream poked his head through and grinned.

His luck was off the charts. It was a ruined jungle temple.

Dream breezed through the obvious traps, mining through the temple wall and examining the hidden treasure, fairly unimpressed by the random ores and items that was contained. He had explored many of these before, more so of desert temples though. It looked like he was going to be here for a few days whilst he stocked up on food. But for now... Dream just wanted to sleep. He didn't even know what time of night it was but suddenly everything that had happened in the nether hit him.

Nevertheless, Dream forced himself to think and act. After some alterations to the various floors and traps, Dream felt the small, cramped hidden treasure room was the perfect place to rest. For one, he had placed some mossy cobblestone and thick vines in such a way the levers were barely visible, and had also placed a distractingly large trapped chest to the right of the stairs, so that if anyone explored the ruins, they would just sail by, and if any mobs decided to wander in, the traps would most likely pick them off.

And to kick it off, if anyone did try flicking any of the levers, he had redirected the piston to nudge him awake, so he could be on guard. Like an physically aggressive alarm clock, almost.

'Yes,' Dream thought contently as he settled down for a long sleep, "no one would be stupid enough to come in here."

Chapter End Notes

It's only taken 12 chapters (and I'll wager a tiny bit more!) but our characters are slowly starting to branch the distance between them :)

We are on 409 kudos (w h a t ? ! !) and it really prompted me to give Dream a chapter whilst I was working on the dream team next chapter... as it would happen, it consequentially COMPLETELY diverted the plot from how I originally planned it but I think you're all going to like it better this way :)

Thank you for your continuous support of kudos and comments, it really keeps me going to see so many of you enjoying this story and invested in seeing where it goes!

As always, thank you all so much, stay safe and hope you enjoyed the chapter!!

Of Course We Will Behave

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

It was fair to say that George's initial impression on travelling was far more romantic than reality. He had happily enjoyed the first few days and nights, camping under the clear starry sky, listening to Sapnap and Bad tell stories about what they had got up to in the past. There had been so many stories - listening to them, George felt like he was listening to someone telling stories where he had been written as the main character.

He was happy he mostly came across as kind, brave and fairly intelligent - although, there were many instances where he had groaned and winced at his stupidity and judgement, despite best intentions. But it hadn't really mattered - Bad and Sap had opened up in a way that he had never seen before, or rather, remembered. Bad was far more full of humour and joking around; he was more partial to being wound up by Sap and George, and seemed like a weight had been lifted from his shoulders. He smiled more and seemed happier, although sometimes he looked off into the distance with a worried line across his brow - George assumed he was thinking of Skeppy, and wondered what their relationship had been.

Sap, in response maybe, had squared up a bit - he was slowly trusting George to look after himself and his judgement, but also taken more of a responsibility in reminding the other two not to get too carried away. George had realised that sadly, the trust he had before was nothing compared to what he had now. It was both pleasing and worrying.

George could forgive all that though - after all, he still felt guilty about the fact he had unintentionally put them through all this in the first place. He also deeply suspected there was a lot more to some of the stories to what had been let on. It was why he wondered about Bad and Skeppy; Bad's failure to hide a smile, even when talking about times where Skeppy had got him in trouble, had made George unwillingly smile too.

So, everything had been going well, first few days.

Then... the rain started.

George did like the rain, and had often enjoyed the sound of it before he went to sleep, or watching it across the window pane of his room. Yet, being out in the rain... everything was horrible. Monsters dug themselves out of the muddy earth, visibility was shortened, everything was always dangerous, always wet and cold. And the rain had forced them to continue through the night, whereupon flying large bat-like monsters had attacked them for, apparently, not sleeping in the rain, according to Sap. George was a little confused by it all but understood enough that he didn't have enough information to make any of an input into the decisions being made. He understood why but once more, he felt worthless and unequal. And he had to listen to Sap and Bad arguing.

Like now, for example.

"We need to keep going or we're going to get blown up or die!" Sap shouted to Bad against the storm as they rode on, three riders galloping close together in a horizontal line.

"But Sap, if we stop we can take shelter and we don't have to be little drenched muffins!" Bad argued back, squealing as a crack of lightning was heard. George spotted a tree instantly catch fire to the side with a flash and a mighty crackle through the air - luckily for the tree, the damage was

halted almost immediately by the hard rain.

"There's nowhere to take shelter, it'll be light in a few hours, and we're almost there!" Sap countered, temporarily swaying off to one side to avoid a charging creeper that was sizzling at them. George had learnt by watching Sap and Bad deal with the exploding creatures how unsuspectingly dangerous they could be when one had snuck up on their camp site. Bad and Sap had drawn out shields and slammed them into the ground in one instance, bracing and taking the impact with minor damage. George had still been amazed at how casually they brushed themselves off afterwards - the hole in the ground was far more terrifying to George than to them it seemed.

George squinted into the distance, trying to see where Sap was referring to. Finally, after what was possibly just under a week, they had reached the dense thick forest. Another over romanticism by George - whilst the ravine had been only a days run, this forest was deceptively further away, what with the starting and stopping and overcautiousness to avoid monsters.

Bad kicked his horse to race on as it gave another defying shake of the reins. "Oh my days, Sap, I'm not staying on this horse any longer!" Bad huffed as he veered off towards the left of the jungle, making his way towards a small cluster of trees. Sap and George had no choice but to follow, making their way over carefully.

As they were approaching the jungle, George saw a light in the darkness out of the corner of his eye, moving around slightly, but in a second it was gone. George blinked water droplets out of his eyes, distracted. He turned his head towards the looming trees as his horse continued to race on, trying to focus on that area. Was someone else out there?

"GEORGE!" he heard a faint shout make its way through the wind as he turned around, realising he had failed to change direction to where Bad and Sap were placing wooden planks into a makeshift shelter around a tree. George was grateful they weren't in another cave.

As he turned around and began to approach the area, he spotted a green shape slowly moving towards the pair. George could see the malicious intent from miles away. Sap and Bad, however, hadn't spotted it.

"WATCH OUT!" George screamed into the wind, only to have his words carried away. Helplessly, George watched the scene unfold as the creeper snuck up inbetween the horses and started to sizzle. George was grateful for the loud sounds of the weather in that moment as it exploded, the horses taking significant damage before poofing into nothing, leaving behind a few remains. Bad and Sap were forced forwards by the blast but thankfully, neither of them seemed particularly hurt.

Bad quickly patched up the small creator sheepishly as Sap started placing an excess of torches around with particular aggression. George pulled up, quickly jumped off his horse and ran through a door shaped hole just as Sap finished placing a roof around the lower leaves of the tree. Bad walked in behind, placing a door behind him, before placing a furnace down and cooking some wood to turn into charcoal. George was grateful for the heat and the immediate effect of drying off.

"Alright, I am not to blame for that" Bad began as Sap gave him a narrowed look.

"We have one horse left Bad. One horse! There are three of us!!" Sap complained as Bad risked a teasing smile.

"Well, we'll have to scooch up pretty tight on the way back. Speaking of..." Bad continued, peering out of the holes in the upper half of the door, "we don't have long until sunrise and it looks like the rain is finally giving up! Yay!"

Bad beamed as Sap shook his head, defeated by Bad's optimism. George cracked a smile, making his way past Bad and peering out into the darkness. His horse looked stiff and uncomfortable, which was unsurprising seeing as it had just witnessed the death of its friends. George turned towards the jungle once more. The trees were huge and thick, with vines everywhere; he secretly hoped there would be a chance to climb them. He could see movement, but they all turned out to be zombies dragging their animated corpses around. He couldn't quite explain it, but something about suddenly seeing that light had made his breath catch in his chest. He had been so sure he had seen it... it had looked like someone placing or quickly knocking down a torch.

George was so focussed on watching the looming monsters coming in and out of the forest, he barely registered the heated discussion that had started behind him.

"... we didn't pass any horses and we have no saddles, one of us has to go back to base and get some more..."

"I don't like the idea of taking the only horse."

"Well, we could make a Nether portal? I'm sure we have one hooke-..."

"Oh be realistic, George would never survive in the nether."

George spun around, an eyebrow raised. "What wouldn't I survive?" he questioned, placing himself between the pair.

Sap placed a hand over his eyes, tiredly. "Sorry George - honestly, it's more a case of whether any of us would survive. It's literally hell."

"Plus, we'd need to gather some obsidian to build it - but it is faster than a horse!" Bad pointed out to Sap, who sighed.

"I don't like the idea of all of us going through the nether to get home, and one person on their own in the nether is just asking to die. So, I'm taking the horse as soon as it gets light and you guys are going to *patiently* wait for me to come back with two others. Okay?"

Even though George and Bad heard the authoritative command and understood it to be in their best interests, there was a secondary reaction for each of them. Bad suddenly sensed an opportunity of freedom that hadn't been present for the last few days, and George sensed a strong reluctance of Sap leaving the pair on their own. Therefore, for different reasons, Bad and George both arrived at the same conclusion.

"Sure!" Bad and George chimed at the same time, both looking at each other in surprise.

"You sure? You're both going to look after each other and be safe?" Sap questioned suspiciously. He continued to ask this right up until the point where he was sitting on the horse, looking at the innocently smiling duo in the morning sun. Bad had already started a small wheat farm, to make a further example of just how well they intended to behave.

"Us lil' muffins will be fiiiiine, don't you go worrying about us!" Bad said cheerfully, enthusiastically waving Sap off. George smiled too, shrugging behind Bad's back at Sap, who smiled in response. He looked at George with an unreadable expression.

"George... stay safe. Please?" Sap asked delicately, and George suddenly had a feeling that the last time he was asked this he had failed him. He squared his shoulders.

"I promise I'll stay safe."

Sap nodded, satisfied. "Well, see you guys in around 2 weeks. I'll be as quick as I can." Sap promised, turning and riding off the way they had came, consulting a compass moments before. George and Bad waved until he was out of sight.

George paused. He *was* going to be safe. But this also gave him the opportunity to prove he could be safe, with Bad, in a dangerous situation. Therefore...

"... so, when are we going to go explore the jungle temple?" George tried to ask uninterestedly. He couldn't help grin as Bad looked at him with a mischievous glint in his eyes.

"Today, of course!"

Chapter End Notes

Hello reader, hope you are okay and well!

There's been a LOT happening in my personal life lately which meant I really didn't feel like writing. However, as life has started getting a bit better day by day, I've started to feel like I can write again :)

Having said that, there has been SO much drama lately in this fandom recently, so I have felt I have had to rewrite the plot a little bit to accommodate for new characters and events than I originally intended... as such, this gave me significant writers block on what to do. However, I think I have now found the way forward!

I'm so astonished that even without posting this story has continued to have support and kudos and it's really helped reading all your comments to feeling that life is going to be okay. I won't say anything else on personal stuff but what I will say is that this story is definitely still active and continuing! :)

Thank you all very much, and I hope you enjoy this chapter - next one is already almost completed, so you won't have as long a gap to wait now! I will do something for the 500+ kudos later in the story, (honestly cannot tell you how much that means to me right now) but I feel like for now, best thing I can do for you all is to keep writing so you can see what happens next!

Stay safe!

No More Than a Whisper

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Right George, it’s question time – let’s see how many you can get right!” Bad looked at George earnestly as George nodded, concentrating. Bad straightened up, pacing back and forth in front of George with the air of a teacher about to accomplish a great feat.

Despite the initial promise of going to the ruins immediately, Bad had sat George down and proceeded to give the most interesting, yet unnecessary, lecture on the dangers and wonders of the jungle. They had both cautiously stood and walked around the edge of the jungle near their base as Bad pointed out various amazing sights – George had spotted a parrot and a strange variation of a cat, and had even been allowed to climb a few vines growing on the side of the thick jungle bark on the edge of the dense biome.

Whilst he appreciated that Bad was letting him do things, he was starting to feel like the dangers were grossly exaggerated. It looked *fun*. He just wanted to *go* already.

Now it was night-time once more, and Bad and George had been chatting through it about the dangers and joys of the jungle. Apparently, it came with a pop quiz too.

“Right – what’s the first thing you and I are going to do when we reach the jungle temple tomorrow?”

“Um... light everything up.” George said after a moment, relaxing slightly as Bad nodded in approval.

“Why do we light everything up?”

“So the monsters can’t appear? Or rather, ‘spawn’?”

“That’s right, so those rotten meanie duckies can’t quack at us.” Bad said the ridiculous sentence so seriously George didn’t even have a chance to laugh before the next question.

“What formation will we enter into the jungle ruin?”

“You in front, me behind...” George said reluctantly.

“Why?” Bad sang, taking out a stick from his inventory and pointing it at George. George rolled his eyes.

“Because I have to stay safe.”

“Exactly... and finally, my little muffin, what do you do in the case of an emergency?”

“I... um...” George stopped, thinking. He knew the answer, but something told him that it was not right... something was telling him he really could handle being slightly dange-

Apparently, George had taken too long and was rewarded with a light tap on the head from Bad with the stick.

“You. Get. Your. Cute. Lil’. Bottom. To. Some. Where. Safe.” Bad sang, emphasising each word with a slightly firmer pat on the head with the stick, causing George to complain loudly by the last

firm pat.

“But what happens if I can’t get somewhere safe, or I can’t get back to you?” George asked worriedly, rubbing the sore spot on his head.

Bad paused. “Well... I’m not going to die, but even if I do, I’ll respawn at home, and I’ll be a few days ride away. And just mine yourself into a wall and block yourself in, you have plenty of food. But that’s not going to happen George... the chances of that are so ridiculous – it would be the same odds as a creeper getting hit by lightning and getting super charged!” Bad seemed so sure of himself and his abilities... but it wasn’t Bad that George was worried about.

“Okay... but why can’t you just take that near-far portal or whatever it’s called to get back? Didn’t you say to Sap it was quicker?” George asked, recalling the conversation from the previous night.

Bad nodded. “Well, yeah, in the *ne-ther*, (close though George), you can travel way quicker than in the overworld (that’s here.) I think it’s like, eight times quicker or something ridiculous!”

“Wait... so we would have got here eight times sooner? Why didn’t we do that?!” George demanded indignantly.

“Well, the nether is a horrible, scary, nasty, mean, terrifying, awful...” Bad struggled to think up more negative adjectives, much to George’s amusement, before settling with “... bad, bad place. It’s really dangerous and very unsafe.”

“And it requires obsidian?” George asked, blatantly ignoring the many negative risks of the nether in favour of positive transport. Bad huffed in response.

“Yes, the gates of hell are actually quite fabulous. Obsidian is such a pain to mine though, it takes so long just to get one piece. And you need at least 10, although you can use more for added flare...” Bad trailed off, thoughtfully. “The portal swirls all sorts of purple and you have to stand in it for a few moments, it can make you really dizzy... and then for a split second, before you travel, you have a moment of total calm...”

Bad came out of his memories to the sight of George staring wide-eyed in fascination. Bad cleared his throat, embarrassed.

“And then it all goes to hell and you end up falling in a pool of lava an-“

“A pool of lava? What, like a literal pool of lava?” George asked excitedly.

“More like lakes upon lakes.” Bad, completely oblivious to how invested George was, shrugged his shoulders. “In any case, surviving on your own there is impossibly hard – you have to have eyes in the back of your head... and the sides... and the top. I don’t think even Sap and I have ever been there on our own.”

George nodded nonchalantly, trying to seem casual. Even Bad and Sap had never been on their own... guess there were places that were deemed too dangerous for all three of them, not just him.

“Looks like the sun has come up. You ready to swing from some vines?” Bad asked teasingly, George nodding happily in response.

“Let’s go!” George yelled, charging through the front door with a sense of destiny and adrenaline.

≡ Yes! Let’s go! ≡

George stopped in his tracks, chest suddenly tight. Bad immediately walked into him, sending the pair tumbling to the floor. George loudly complained as the whole of Bad's body weight came crashing onto his back, Bad giving a little shriek upon impact.

"And *this* is why I should go first – although you look great from this angle George" Bad joked, affording a cheeky wink to George as George pushed Bad off, laughing.

"My chest hurts..." George half laughed, half complained, rubbing just off centre. The moment had passed, but George was so sure he had heard a voice.

"Yeah, you muffin head, I just fell on you, of course it's going to hurt!" Bad said slowly, giving George a weird look.

"No, I mean... never mind" George trailed off, unable to explain the voice in his head.

"Okay... well, let's get swinging!" Bad joked, bumping into George playfully. George lost his concern as they approached the jungle. This was going to be fun.

After spending far more time than needed jumping and racing over thick leaves and branches, George finally managed to convince Bad that the view from the top of a particularly sturdy-looking jungle tree, covered in vines, would make the perfect spot to see the jungle temple.

Sap had taken the map, either accidentally or on purpose, so they were making a careful note of what direction their makeshift home was whilst paving their way towards the forbidden adventure.

After significant climbing, with an accidental word from George resulting in a gasp and a lecture from Bad, they reached the top. They were both exhausted and sweating as the sun dipped before them, indicating they had a few hours until sunset... Bad immediately collapsed on his back, staring up at the sky and talking about how much of a pushover he was and how he would never climb another tree ever again. George barely listened, staring at the wonders in front of him.

In front of him, for as far as he could see in one direction, was a lush, dense vegetation of a world untouched by human hands. Clusters of trees grew so close to one another than it looked like they were all supporting and holding each other up. The sky seemed lighter up here and the small patches of water that George could spot seemed a dark blue in comparison.

George squatted down, still breathing heavily as he tried to take everything in in more detail. From here he could really appreciate how tall the tree he was standing on was, and how much of the ground was just a blanket of leaves and vines. George spotted something in the distance, thick and tall, unsure of what it was.

"Bad, what's that?" George questioned, pointing it out and bringing Bad out of his dramatic rant about lack of energy behind him. Bad came over, squinting.

"Where? Oh, that's bamboo. We should actually get some, they're really good for making scaffolding. Which are like, four legged ladders."

After a brief pause, Bad added "oh, I think pandas eat them too."

George turned slowly to Bad, mouth ajar.

"There are pandas?" George asked in wonder as Bad hummed in response.

"My bad, completely forgot to mention them. Oh, and *that* over there is our aim for the rest of the day." George followed Bad's indication and spotted a small grey structure, barely visible.

“How did you spot that?” George questioned in disbelief.

Bad beamed at the sight of George failing to look unimpressed. Teasingly, with an air of smugness, he replied: “Well, I’m amazing and my eyesight is just that little bit better than yours!”

George paused. Everything was shaded perfectly but it was all so... yellow and green. Maybe Bad did have better eyesight.

En route to the temple, George found himself constantly having to remind Bad about their main goal. Bad was distracted by melons, cocoa beans, pumpkins, parrots, bamboo and chickens – George lost him for a few seconds at one point and turned around to see him coming back with a black and white cat in his arms, declaring it would ‘save us from the creepers’. George doubted this severely but wasn’t prepared to risk a scratched face to voice it.

Maybe this is what Sap felt when he and Bad went off on a distracted spree.

Dodging the occasional arrow shot from the dark sections of shadow from the trees above, they made it to the temple just as the sun was coming down. Armed with torches, they littered the area around and on top with torches before finally making their way inside. The upper floor was completely clear, as was the middle – which just left the steps into the dark lower floor to be discovered.

George was excited although a little underwhelmed. It was beautiful and fascinating but... so far, not exactly dangerous. George set up a campfire to cook some chickens on, with a little help from Bad, and the pair of them chatted casually whilst eyeing up the dark stairs that Bad had blocked off with some cobble.

“Okay, I think we’re ready to go all hardcore on these stairs.” George drew out his sword and shield, nervously leaning from side to side.

“Hey.” George turned to Bad, who was giving him a radiant smile, seemingly arising from his very soul. George hesitated, instantly feeling reassured. Bad looked George square in the eye. “You are a brave little muffin and you can do this.”

Removing the dirt, and leading the way, Bad entered down the steps, George immediately behind.

The air was instantly thicker down here, and quiet. Everything seemed so... undisturbed. Abandoned.

As they neared the bottom of the stairs, George noticed a large chest lying in wait on the right, which Bad pointed out. They made their way past it, lighting things up as they went along, nodding at each other to save it until last.

“See, this is like, a tripwire... so if you stand on it, it’s usually bobby-trapped, okay? Okay, watch this...” Bad whispered to George. He gently nudged George into a narrow slit in the wall, squishing himself in front and wedging George in. If it had anyone else George might have objected, but he didn’t mind being so close to Bad.

Not at all, in fact.

“And...” Bad breathed, delicately throwing a stick onto the floor. George heard a faint click and then recoiled instinctively as an arrow flew past the area in front of them at a safe distance. Bad handed George some shears and scooted out of the way, motioning for George to carefully cut the tripwire.

George held his breath as he edged forward, hand trembling slightly. Calming himself, he made a carefully calculated cut.

Bad nodded vigorously and put away his items in his inventory momentarily to give George a double thumbs up before placing another torch down. The same thing happened as they finally reached the chest at the end. Bad fumbled around behind the chest before nodding to George.

George slowly opened it. He heard a click and an arrow whistle through the air towards him, but Bad was there behind him, with a shield, and the arrow landed in the centre with a satisfying *thunk*. Bad grinned smugly back at George as George struggled to hide a smile. That was too close but he liked Bad playing the hero for a while.

The loot inside was a little disappointing to Bad but George thought it was wonderful. Everything in there he knew he'd keep for a long time to come, just for the sake of sentiment. Bad impatiently motioned for George to follow him back to the steps, to the larger chest they had seen.

As they approached the entrance, still not daring to speak more in a whisper, George noticed for the first time some thick vines hanging on the wall, directly in front of them. He edged his way forward, away from Bad, who was taking a moment to sort out his inventory and place things in his ender chest before tackling the large double chest.

George placed a hand on the vines, running his hand against them along the wall behind until his hand pushed up against air. George frowned, moving the vines to one side – there was a narrow passage, but in the darkness, he could make out a series of levers. He walked into the tight space, making sure to hold up the vines so Bad could see where he had gone.

“Bad?” George whispered over his shoulder, turning around to see Bad opening the chest. Bad held the heavy lid open with both hands, peering in, before turning to George. He whispered gleefully to George, motioning.

“Ooh, there’s some horse armo-“

BANG

That was all the warning George and Bad had as the rigged chest exploded.

George was forced backwards, protected significantly from the blast due to the passageway. Finding himself flung against the series of levers, he accidentally knocked all three of them down in one go, oblivious as he picked himself off the ground and hobbled towards the blast site in front of him.

Bits of armour and food lay scattered around. There was no sign of Bad.

George slumped against the wall, unable to process what had just happened, his ears ringing painfully from the loud explosion.

"...Bad?!"

Chapter End Notes

A much longer chapter this time around - I feel like I need to catch my breath a bit!

Hope you are continuing to enjoy this, we're almost at 600 kudos! Thank you so much, you are all wonderful people and I hope that when you read this you are well and safe! :) Please continue to leave comments and kudos and bookmark this story if you want to stay on top of when chapters are added!

See you all in the next chapter for a long-awaited meeting between two loveable characters...

So I Guess We'll Never Meet Again

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

BANG

Dream's eyes darted open at the sound of the explosion as he instinctively shot upright in his bed. A split second later, the piston alarm he had set up suddenly shot into the side of his body, painfully pushing him against the wall – it was as if someone had yanked all three levers down immediately, causing a full and sudden extension into his ribs.

He heard footsteps moving around on the other side of the wall.

He sprung into action, digging down from his temporary bedroom into the passageway he had created to the nether portal, trying not to groan. He knew it had been a good safety precaution. It was officially not safe here anymore, and he did not want to meet the person he had undoubtedly injured.

Dream breathed a curse as he saw light was trickling into the passageway. Looked like the explosion had exposed a small section of the underground route. He'd have to wait for the person above him to move away before he could go past.

“...Bad?!”

Dream froze, keeping his breathing quiet and to a minimum. He put two and two together immediately – he had just killed this person's friend. If they then saw him in this tunnel, hiding having just blown them up...

Dream silently drew out his sword and edged forward, preparing for a fight. He heard the person around him moving around – the light vanished for a moment as the person picked up all the scattered objects, silently putting them into a nearby chest; Dream could hear the creaking as it opened and closed.

It was the failure of a suppressed sob that had Dream lower his sword and lean forward, just ever so slightly, to see what kind of person he was facing. Why would you cry at someone blowing up? They would just respawn, after all.

Dream looked up at the figure above him.

He's mine.

Dream immediately dismissed the territorial thought inside his head. That was ridiculous, he did not want to kill this guy if he could help it. Perhaps his bloodlust was getting the better of him.

Dream eyed up the young man in front of him. His back was turned to Dream, but Dream could see he was wearing a greenish cyan blue t-shirt, with short sleeves resting halfway down his biceps. His shirt was slightly untucked on one side, running past almost deep lilac-blue jeans, and when he turned around, Dream caught a glimpse of red and white on the front of his shirt, almost like an extended letterbox opening, or a long target.

He had a layer of grey dust from the explosion on him, settling in on the top of his tuft of dark brown hair, and Dream saw he had white glasses hiding his eyes.

Dream wondered what colour they were.

“Move back...” Dream told himself, commanding his legs to edge away from the man. But he paused as he noticed something else about the glasses.

Slight tears were trickling out from behind then, and lower down on his face, his lips were holding in a quiver.

Dream did not know if he was fascinated by the complete over-reaction to someone blowing up, or the tears that were starting to uncontrollably fall.

*He could not remember the last time he had cried. Or even **seen** somebody cry.*

The stranger forced himself to take deep breaths, and walked forward with purpose, and Dream slowly backed away from him, quickly placing two blocks in front of him whilst staying low and ready for anything.

Except for the sound of someone falling right in front of the wall he had just created, followed by an immediate “Owwwww!”

Dream stopped crouching for a moment. No way had this person just fallen down into his tunnel.

This guy was an idiot.

Dream listened as the person started to move away from him, further down the tunnel, following it towards the cave. Dream waited until he couldn't hear anything and cautiously broke down the temporary wall. He edged forward.

A small shadow suddenly fell in front of him, Dream instinctively plunging his sword towards it.

He barely stopped in time as he heard a small noise.

“Mewl.”

Dream looked in disbelief as the cat rubbed up against his legs, circling him and playfully patting at his boots.

“Get off...” Dream muttered, trying to nudge it off. The cat hissed slightly, shackles raised, before turning and racing down the tunnel.

“Great. Now I have a cat to deal with too.” Dream sarcastically grumbled as he made his way down the tunnel, not daring to light a torch and instead running his hands along the wall to make sure he didn't get lost.

Dream quickly made his way to the opening of the cave where the nether portal was. He poked his head around carefully.

He watched as the person was examining the portal, circling it and hesitantly putting his hand inside before withdrawing it, looking at it closely. There were several moments where they tried to catch some of the particles flying out of the swirling depths, concluding after various attempts that they were not, in fact, solid.

Clearly, they had never seen a nether portal before.

Interesting. Very... interesting.

Dream slowly moved from the tunnel, moving further into the shadows, away from the dim light of the portal. He watched from a safe distance in the dark as the person pulled a rucksack off their shoulders, dropping it in front of them before bending down, withdrawing some oak signs.

Dream was confused. What was wrong with this person? Why were they not just taking it out of their inventory?

He watched as words were scribbled on the wood using charcoal, being set up before the young man stood back to admire his handiwork. Suddenly, he turned and started heading for the tunnel, but just as he reached it, he stopped and turned, directly facing the dark passage where Dream was standing, pressed up against the wall.

Dream watched, heart racing as the figure seemingly leaned their head towards him; Dream read his body language as being slightly confused and cautious.

“... Hello?” The stranger placed an uncertain step towards him, and in that moment, Dream did the only thing he could think of.

“Hisssssssss-”

Instantly, the figure gave a yelp and ran out of sight back down the tunnel – Dream could hear his footsteps continuously racing away as they got further away. Dream gave a very quiet wheeze, holding his sides as he struggled to breathe. He couldn’t believe that worked.

“Meow?”

Dream looked at the cat, sitting a little way from him. It delicately walked towards the tunnel before plonking itself down, looking at him expectantly.

Dream walked over to the signs, pausing to scratch the cat behind the ears, and squinted to read the scrawny handwriting in the glow of the portal:

If you are reading
this Sap and Bad,
I am sorry but I
have gone into

the portal. Bad
said I could get
back to you both
this way. I will

make sure to
mark my way so
if something goes
wrong, you can

find me. I know
I can do this.
Please keep each
other safe. -G

Dream felt uncomfortable. It sounded like a farewell letter of some sort. It was clear this "G" was not meant to be going through the portal... or rather, his friends didn't want him to go through it. At the same time...

Dream read over the words again, pausing on "I know I can do this". Clearly, G was trying to prove they could navigate the nether... which was ridiculous because no one could survive on their own, or without a guide or someone who knew their way around it.

Someone like...

"Nope. Nope. Nope." Dream walked up the portal and stood inside it, arms folded as he turned and saw the cat looking at him with a seemingly knowing smirk.

"No." Dream told the cat seriously as his vision began to swirl.

He did not help random strangers. And he certainly did not do favours.

Chapter End Notes

Ngl, I had constant nervous butterflies writing this chapter...

So much is going on behind the scenes plot-wise, and I can't wait to share with you the next few chapters where they'll be a fair amount of laughter and possibly a few tears!

We are almost at 700 kudos... which is insane because that means we're heading towards 750 and I haven't even done a 500 reader-input chapter decision yet (which is coming up) -- every 250 kudos I will do some kind of reader comment influenced plot point, so you guys can really feel a part of this story! :)

On that note, thank you for the continued support and kudos, it does mean a lot to know so many people are being made happy with this story :)

SD: Seeing as Dream has mentioned that him and George do sometimes read and laugh at fanfictions, thought I'd just add this at the end of this chapter so it's been mentioned as a sort of blanket.....

Ahem - To Clay / George / anyone else written about in this fic: if you ever read this, I hope it's something you can laugh at / not take too seriously and hope you enjoy your characters being portrayed and written in the way that they are!

Right, now that's done... hope you all enjoyed this chapter, and I'll see you all in the next one!! :)

Close, and yet, so far

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Bad opened his eyes sleepily, and it took a moment for him to realise he was staring up at the ceiling of his bedroom. He rolled over and stretched out happily on the bed, like an overgrown cat, and made content noises with his mouth as he snuggled back into the warm covers. He happily smiled as he kept his eyes closed, sleepy. Sap would come wake him up in a moment, and then they'd go find George, and the-

Bad's eyes shot open, instantly awake.

'Muffins.' he whispered to himself, terrified, feeling a wave of cold fear sweep over him as scattered memories of Sap taking a horse back, George and him entering the temple... he strained to remember what had happened after they had lit the torches, but to no avail. But if he was here...

He ran to George's room, feet pounding on the floor almost as loudly as his heart in his ears, as he flung the door open.

A neatly made bed greeted him - George wasn't here.

Bad paused, unsure what to think. Either George had died, respawned, and was up and about somewhere already... or he was still at the temple, alive and safe... for now. He did not know whether to feel relieved or not that he hadn't found George in his room.

A distant bang towards the village centre distracted him for a moment, followed by a loud cheer. Puzzled and still full of adrenaline, Bad ran out of the house towards the marketplace, barely noticing the lack of villagers around him as he raced through the streets. Had Sap returned? How long had he been out? Bad reached the back of the crowd, pushing his way to the front, villagers recognising him and moving to one side for him, albeit still extremely focused on the scene before them. When Bad finally reached the front, his mouth dropped open in disbelief at the strange sight before him.

The market place had been changed to what could only be described as a large, unnecessary obstacle course - spider webs lay scattered around, hurdles and jumps with deep water after them, thick wooden trap doors to balance on, ladders to climb... Bad even spotted the occasional magma block precariously dotted around. Around 30 villagers were running around at a reasonably fast pace and were acting like hyperactive hamsters in a wheel as they continuously looped the circuit.

'Annnnd that's it ladies and gentlemen, if you have not signed up and joined the race now, it is too late, you may watch from the sides but keep your eyes on the prize and let's get racing!!' Bad's heart jumped at the familiar voice and his breath caught in his throat. He looked around for the owner but could not see anything past the villagers. He started pushing his way through the crowd, circling the obstacle course, emotions racing almost as fast as the villagers competing against one another.

'Ohhhh you there sir, yes you, no, no don't try and plead innocence, I saw you get caught in the web, out you go-' the voice bellowed out across the crowd and Bad saw one of the contestants sulkily remove themselves from the course near the webs. The crowd cheered and booed and

laughed as more and more contestants slipped up, returning to the side to watch those remaining.

'You know I have eyes and ears everywhere, you can't see me but I can certainly see you over there, lady, yes, hi, hello, if you fall in the water, you HAVE TO GO OUUUUT, we have some lovely wool from only the finest of sheep for you, especially for you, to dry yourself on the side...' the narrating continued, Bad pausing in his hopeless search.

"Skeppy!!" Bad desperately shouted, only to be drowned by a sudden cheer from the crowd as yet another villager failed an obstacle. He was never going to get Skeppy's attention in the crowd, and he resigned himself to public humiliation as he jumped onto the course, villagers cheering his late but exciting entry as he started running the circuit.

"Remember, if you are lapped then YOU. ARE. OUT. We have someone fast approaching coming up behind the spiders and oof, that will cost him and YES that is a LAP I'm afraid, come on KEEP GOING, DON'T STOP, YOU STOP AND YOU ARE OUT, and we have someone else who has decided to join, saves a revival and seems like the crowd favourite as they come into view and..."

Bad panted heavily, starting to sweat as the narration stopped abruptly as he dodged spider webs, pushing himself to catch up to the person in front. There were four of them left and Bad had no idea whether someone was behind him or not. He kept going, realising the villagers starting to raise an eyebrow at the sudden lack of commentary.

'... And it looks like an old duckie has found its way onto the circuit, let's see if he will fly or if he'll quack!' Skeppys voice rang out with a slight edge to it, and Bad had no choice but to keep running, stunned by Skeppys response as the commentary was now fully focused on him. Bad felt his face burn red, mainly from embarrassment.

"It's your one, your only, BadBoyHalo and yes indeed he has been such a bad boy, joining the course so late, but hey, I'll give him credit, he is running as if his life depends on it, and he's catching up to third place, third place is starting to feel that pressure of their superior breathing down his neck and yes, third is OUT, stumbles over as the battle for first and second continues, what a race ladies and gents, something to tell the grandchildren if you win this and win 10 WHOLE EMERALD BLOCKS, lets destroy the economy (only kidding folks, we have plenty of events lined up for everyone!), and first and second are battling it out, almost at the finishing line..."

Bad watched helplessly as the two villages crossed the finishing line several obstacles ahead of him, the crowd going wild as Bad pulled himself up onto the last ladders, jumping down and stumbling before deliriously making his way to the finish.

"Annnnd that's about it folks, 10 WHOLE EMERALD BLOCKS FOR OUR AMAZING WINNER and I'll even throw in a emerald block for second place, bad luck but you're still going home with something! And your own BadBoyHalo coming in third, there he goes over the finishing line, and we'll be giving him a special one and one with yours truly, to give some advice on how to come in at first place next time!"

Bad winced as he held his side, bending over and rubbing out a stitch. He could not quite believe that had just happened. He dimly registered everyone dispersing at a fairly quick rate, excitedly chatting about what had happened.

"Hey Bad." Bad looked up, panting, at the shining blue figure in front of him that had seemingly appeared out of nowhere.

"Skeppy..." Bad breathed with relief, his face breaking out in a genuine true smile. Skeppy's eyes matched it for a moment before they hardened, his eyebrows furrowing as he frowned.

"I suppose you're wondering what's going on?" Skeppy asked, not waiting for Bad's answer as he continued "... well, I left a shulker box of iron and emerald blocks in my shop, and on my return to pick it up, you know what I see Bad, huh? You know what I see? Total chaos because SOMEONE decided that it was a good idea to leave absolutely NO ONE in charge with any sense of what to do and go galloping off on an adventure!"

Bad stared, stunned, as Skeppy started pacing around, struggling to keep his voice low. "It was crazy, no one knew what to do, some people decided to change the price on imports, people refused to work on projects, I separated, PHYSICALLY, separated, the beginnings of a riot and I had to come up with something, so I started awarding people for doing mundane tasks, like working together to build the best house, or staying quiet the longest because god I had a headache from so many people asking me what to do and now, somehow, I'm in charge and then YOU," Skeppy hissed, looking positively livid as Bad tried to speak, "YOU, suddenly appear in a race, which is just great, because everyone will think you're all coming back now and yet you have no items equipped or armour on and I see no sign of George or Sapnap. What is going on?!"

Skeppy stopped as tears started to form in Bad's eyes, calming himself down. Bad's lower lip wobbled as he managed to quietly clear his throat, but failed to speak.

"Skeppy..." Bad managed to choke out, trying to control his breathing. Skeppy's defences instantly dropped as he placed a supportive arm around Bad's shoulder, crouching down beside him.

"Aw, Bad, I'm sorry I didn't mean to..." Skeppy began, feeling awkward and awful all at once. He waited as patiently as he could as Bad worked his way past his breathing with shaky breaths.

"I... um... Sapnap is on his way back here, on a horse... he left me, with George and I... I lit up the temple with George and then I died, and I don't remember what happened to him, and now I'm here, and I don't know what to do Skeppy, what are you even doing here, why are you so mad at me..." Bad managed to get out in-between sobs, falling further into Skeppy's arm as Skeppy instinctively caught him and held him close.

"Hey, let's have none of that, okay? I'm sorry, I just didn't know what to do when I saw you and it's been so hard here, I didn't want you all coming back and thinking I'd taken over." Skeppy explained, trying to shrug off how much he cared about how he was portrayed.

Bad closed his eyes against Skeppy's chest. "I missed you so much..." Bad whispered, not expecting anything back. A slight squeeze from a silent Skeppy said more than a thousand words ever could, and Bad smiled, against everything going on, at the comforting warmth that flooded through him.

"So... it sounds like you can't do anything until Sap is back, right? There's no point racing off on your own, and if George respawns, he'll come back here... Or he will respawn there if he slept, but either way, he'll be fine. There's nothing you can do until Sap comes back, so just... just stay with me and we'll have some fun, okay?" Skeppy pulled away from Bad, still crouching and holding him firmly at shoulder's length.

Bad nodded reluctantly. "I let him down again..." Bad mumbled, slightly in shock as he started to realise what had happened.

Skeppy frowned in disagreement. "Bad, you didn't fail anyone..." he said firmly, shaking his head at the very thought, tightening his grip on Bad.

"But..." Bad began before Skeppy cut across him.

"Bad, I know you, and I know that if you died, it would have been for a damn good reason. You probably saved George or something heroic, can you remember anything at all?" Skeppy asked, trying to sound gentle as he watched Bad thinking.

Bad shook his head, trying to focus. "I just remember lighting torches... and I think I told him to hide if things went wrong..." Bad struggled to recall what exactly had happened, just seeing George's trusting eyes before him.

"There, you see? George is way more intelligent than you two give him credit for. His natural survival instincts will kick in and I **guarantee** he'll choose the safest option available to him." Skeppy let go of Bad's shoulders and helped pull him up on his feet. Bad wished the warmth of Skeppys hands didn't disappear so quickly as Skeppy motioned for them to walk on, leading the way.

"So..." Bad managed to pull himself together, looking around at the now empty obstacle course, "... what is all this?"

"Ah. I was testing." Skeppy's face had a slight smirk to it as he innocently watched Bad's puzzled expression.

"Okay... what were you testing?" Bad questioned, knowing full well Skeppy had no intention of answering immediately but going along with it anyway. He failed to hide a smile as Skeppy nonchalantly shrugged.

"I was *testing*." Skeppy explained, motioning around them.

Bad opened his mouth to say something, but paused, changing his mind. "Well, yes, you've said that Skeppy, but WHAT were you testing?!" Although Bad was very capable of being patient, especially with Skeppy, Skeppy knew how quickly Bad could be wound up was another story.

"I. Was. Test. Ing." Skeppy sang, laughing as Bad made a strangled noise in his throat.

"Okay, fine, you said about the economy? Were you seeing if this would help? You were trying to be a good little muffin?" Bad asked despite himself, always firmly believing the best in Skeppy and feeling a bit more like his old self, despite himself.

"... Bad..." Skeppy's whole body language changed as he glanced across almost shyly at Bad, looking at him with earnest eyes.

Bad felt time freeze around him as Skeppy moved closer towards him.

"Yes?" Bad breathed, unable to move.

"... I was testing."

"..."

Three, two, one... Skeppy continued down in his head as he watched Bad's mind process and explode.

“SKEEEEEPPYYYYYYY!!!!!! YOU ABSOLUTE MUFFIN HEAD WHAT WERE YOU TESTING?!?!” Bad yelled as Skeppy burst out laughing, motioning his hands up in mock surrender as Bad started to lightly punch him, albeit slightly harder than a friendly punch.

“Okay, fine, FINE, geesh, I was testing...” Skeppy began, frantically moving on as Bad looked like he was about to froth at the mouth, “... how the economy would react if I started giving out prizes.”

“But Skeppy, that’s your money...” Bad stated softly, instantly forgetting his anger as Skeppy shrugged humbly.

“It’s not doing me any good sitting in a box, and this place needed the help. Seriously. So much help.” Skeppy teased half seriously as Bad sighed and looked towards the gate, worried.

“Look Bad, Sap will be back soon, you can both go on horses... I mean, how far is it, could you both go through the nether and I can deliver some horses for you on the other side?”

Bad turned to Skeppy so quickly that Skeppy almost instinctively summoned his sword. “You’d do that for us?” Bad asked, eyes shining brightly with a wide and hopeful smile.

Bad watched as Skeppy turned away, facing the heavy gates before Skeppy mumbled “It’s not like I’m not going to help you out, I’d be a pretty bad friend if I didn’t help...”

Bad allowed himself to selfishly feel a little disappointment at his answer before readily responding “No, you’re a great friend, and I’m sure Sap will appreciate it too! And George...”

Bad looked off towards the gates, which had just opened to allow a wandering trader and his two llamas safe passage into their home. He completely missed the look that briefly flashed across Skeppy’s face when he mentioned George; a mixture of jealousy and guilt.

“Please be safe George...” Bad mumbled as he looked off into the distance, wondering how long it would take for Sapnap to arrive back home.

Sapnap was furious and did not want to talk about it, even to himself.

He had been running for several days because a creeper had blown up his horse.

Well, George’s horse.

Either way, a horse had been killed, and he was **not** happy about it.

“It’s fine...” he reasoned with himself as he continuously sprinted, having ditched running with the sword and shield equipped over the slight chance that he’d run faster without them.

It was just coming up to sunset, and Sapnap knew that he should not push running much further before digging himself into a hole for the night. It was getting to the point where he felt it would be easier to bury all his things, mark it with a big **X**, allow himself to be killed, and then even if he forgot where the **X**, was, he’d surely find it at some point...

But what if his death resulted in him forgetting to bring horses for George and Bad? Or worse, he forgot they were at the temple?

Sapnap frowned, digging himself a staircase into the ground and clearing some room, lighting it carefully up. He did not even want to risk sleeping through the night... he had to get back to them.

He knew that the chances of Bad and George not going to the temple were slim. With him taking this long, each passing day that chance grew slimmer.

But he knew they would at least be careful, and George had promised to stay safe... Bad would be extra attentive, George would be extra on guard... and they probably needed a bit of time together anyway to reconnect.

Time away from George meant Sapnap could keep his emotions a bit more in check.

Sapnap stared at the ceiling, thinking hard. George didn't know any different, and Bad was just wonderfully optimistic in the worse of situations... but Sapnap couldn't help feeling a bit hurt and angry towards George.

George was blissfully unaware of how hard it was to lose a close friend and have them walking around and to not know you... no idea at all. He knew it was unfair, but he couldn't help how he felt.

The three of them had shared responsibility for such a long time... and then it had just been him.

The decisions he had made, without and about George, were decisions he had to do that all on his own.

He had even made some about Bad, which he wasn't sure if known, would ever be forgiven.

Sapnap pulled out his compass, turning it around in his hands, watching the red arrow point always assuredly pointing in the same direction.

"They needed to be independent again. It was the right decision..." Sapnap whispered into the air, unsure of who he was convincing.

"Three more days... and I'll be back home."

Chapter End Notes

Hi all, hope you enjoyed this slightly different chapter to the usual!

I have a big decision for you guys to vote on in a chapter or two, but for now, a smaller question to vote on:

What do we think about swearing / "rude" language in this fic? I can write either way but there are probably instances in the future that could arguably call for a bad word or two, or for humorous purposes... I want you guys to decide because, at the end of this day, this story is for all the readers out there who enjoy reading this, and I don't want to write in such a way that you dislike the fic, so it's as much your story as me writing it :)

Hope you enjoyed the chapter and as always, keep safe and happy and I'll see you in the next one!

Oh and please hit that kudos if you haven't already, and keep commenting even if you don't want to vote, it's nice to be able to reply to you all and hear your thoughts! :)

This is Fine

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George tried to calm his shaky breathing as he tightly clenched the hilt of his sword, trying to focus on not letting the blade tremble too much. He had seen creepers blown up, Bad h-... Bad had blown up, and it was like a creeper explosion, so he had to be careful. He promised he'd be safe.

He had promised.

George slowly edged forward, shield and sword ready, and made his way back along the tunnel, reluctantly leaving the light of the earlier blast that had taken Bad away from him. He could still see Bad's eyes shining before the world turned bright and he was blasted away...

George shook his head, focussing. He could not afford to be distracted right now.

After a moment's hesitation, George decided it would be safer to light up the dark, looming corridor with torches and held out a shaky hand as he pictured dropping the sword into his inventory.

The sword dropped to the floor and landed painfully on George's smallest toe.

"Ahhh!" George hissed through his teeth, painfully hobbling on one leg as he picked up the sword, momentarily forgetting his situation. Frowning, he closed his eyes and forced a deep breath, before dropping the sword again.

He sighed with relief at the lack of noise and pain to his foot that would indicate a fallen sword and reached out to grab torches without thinking. He hastily lit and started placing them against the wall, realising that later, he would have to ask Bad and Sap how they stuck to the wall as if held by tiny strong bits of slime.

George crept forward, using his torches far too readily, eventually making his way to the exit of the tunnel and into the cave. He carefully put his shield away and opted for cobblestone, shuffling his weight from one side to the other, hyping himself up.

"Run in, block up, run in, block up..." he muttered as he gazed at the vaguely purple and yellow lit room. He couldn't remember whether he had placed the torches or not. He must h-

~...Come on, George!...~

Letting out an estranged battle cry, George charge forward, placing torches around him in a blind panic and blocking up the cave to create a small, enclosed space to the left and right of him, safely surrounding the portal. He thought he could hear the distant sound of an zombie groaning, but that was now somewhere safely away from him on the other side of his makeshift wall. George tilted his head in consideration as he re-read his signs.

**If you are reading
this Sap and Bad,
I am sorry but I
have gone into**

**the portal. Bad
said I could get
back to you both
this way. I will**

**make sure to
mark my way so
if something goes
wrong, you can**

**find me. I know
I can do this.
Please keep each
other safe. -G**

George looked in content at the messages again. He could not possibly explain it clearer – he would go through the portal, very carefully avoiding the lakes of lava, and be back home within a day or two. He was sure there must be some way of communicating to them that he was okay once he was there – he'd even be there before Sap got back, and he and Bad could welcome him home! Maybe he could even spare Bad a very painful lecture on creepers...

George smiled at his thoughts before being interrupted by the quiet, soft music he had first heard when he had discovered the portal. He eagerly strained his ears, but it was almost as if the moment he became aware of it, it faded away, quietly teasing and tempting.

“You are going in there so you can get home” George said to himself out loud, happy to hear his voice, at the very least, sounded confident.

He cautiously placed an arm inside and felt uncertain if his arm felt cool due to the portal or because he was so convinced it must feel cold that his arm just felt like it.

He was hesitant and confused. But those particles seemed comforting and seemed to land on his eyelashes, his cheek, dancing on his hands and around his head... George was not even aware that he was standing in the portal until the world started to slowly spin. He remembered Bad saying that it lasted for a bit and then you were through. He just had to withstand it.

He knew now that he had been through worse.

George groaned as he placed his hands onto the cool obsidian within the portal, arms outstretched and holding him in place. He scrunched his eyes closed but the swirling seemed to be inside his head, rather than his eyesight. He breathed heavily, heart racing, stomach feeling empty and full all at once.

Just a bit more... think about them... think about home... think about Dr-

George's thoughts barely felt recognisable as he hung onto the last of his consciousness, his mind flashing with random colours of black, blue, green, this one fragment of brilliant green. George reached out, hurting, and exhilarated all at once.

Then the calm.

The world was suddenly quiet. No spinning. No stomach. Nothing. No beginning or end, just... George.

And then.

George suddenly felt himself slip forward as the world became unbearable hot around him and the portal roared, almost spitting him out. He staggered forwards, his eyes watering as he coughed too hard, eyes streaming as he knelt down and threw up. He wiped the half-formed tears in his eyes away, unable to look away from the sight of his own vomit sizzling due to the heat of the floor.

The red floor. Or... was it red? Was it black?

George squinted his eyes, looking around at the world as his brain almost struggled to decide whether the world was red or black, gold or orange. After shaking his head and rubbing his eyes firmly, George found himself thinking almost impossible thoughts.

Like how he was so sure that somehow, they were both the same colour, and that even though he was now seeing red, black would make sense too.

That this was not so bad; there were off-coloured green trees in the distance, and the lava spilling down in the distance seemed to appear almost as natural and soothing as a waterfall.

George felt almost confident here. Why did this feel so... familiar?

He found himself stepping forward cautiously, taking everything in quickly. He gasped and laughed out loud as he spun around manically, forgetting his nausea momentarily.

"I. I did it!" George ran his hands through his hair, a mixture of disbelief and pride surging through him. He laughed gleefully as he thought what Sap and Bad would say if they could see him now.

He paused as he thought about the best way to communicate where he had gone. Pillars would be good for marking, but what if Sap and Bad missed one and got lost?

George stepped back a few moments later to admire his handy work of a large dirt arrow against the floor, pointing away from the portal to the left.

"Right... right..." George said to himself, nodding his head at nothing. He carefully equipped his sword and shield and made his way forward.

After journeying for what could have been moments or days or weeks, George was happily confused at the place he was in. The passing of time was the confusing part, as both his clock and compass seemed broken within this hell. He was judging his time on how much steak he was consuming, but had lost count fairly quickly... maybe he was at 20ish? More? Less?

That was the confusing part... the happy part?

The nether was... fine.

What was all the fuss about?

This place was AMAZING!

George, after studying the block for a while, had discovered most of hell was made up of 'netherrack'. He had discovered this by holding it in his hands and just knowing what it was, which made him convinced that he must have been here before.

It was this confidence boost that had made him continue with a bounce in his step.

Sure, there was lava which seemed to run as quick as water, but it had a sort of beauty to it. George had seen all manners of strange creatures in the distance, which he had been cautious to dig to keep a wide distance from, but he always found that when he arrived where he thought they had been, they had simply vanished.

Maybe they were simply scared of him? After all, he was a stranger coming into their home with a sword and a shield.

Either way, George had taken small samples and snippets of everything, feeling like a tourist away from home... which he guessed, he was. He has seen platforms raised at incredibly high and low levels, discovered a glowing glass that splinted into dust at his pickaxe, gold, REAL golden nuggets from the ground... he had seen large pigs with tusks and felt like he was being watched constantly, only to realise that there were creatures who seemed to teleport away as soon as he noticed them in the corner of his eye. He had not seen one properly yet but decided to keep an eye out, curious of the purple particles they left in their wake, like the portal he had come through. His favourite part was the white crystals from the ground; occasionally, those small orbs shot out of them - George had stopped mining them after a while in case he was somehow disturbing their home.

However, the most fascinating thing in this dimension were these half man, half pig creatures. George had not been able to see one up close because every time he crept towards them, it was as if there were some silent battle horn being blasted that summoned all of them of one accord to run away from him, ignoring him completely. George swore one of them considered him for a split second before running away, not considering him important enough to investigate.

In fact, George's only encounter of any real danger had been when he had found a tiny, small cube that had jumped at him, almost forcing him back a step. Luckily, he was in a safe area, but George recognised the potential danger of it happening near an edge. Feeling awful, he had stabbed the small creature before it had a chance to burn or push him back further, picking up the smooth, half solid, half liquid cream that it left behind. Maybe Bad or Sap could find a use for it.

Nope, the nether was completely harmless.

In fact, George could only see one problem with the nether.

He had no idea where he was.

Sure, he had been placing occasional arrows every time he changed direction, making staircases to go up and down levels, making platforms encased in cobblestone, slowly and steadily, across the drop that led to certain death by lava. He had occasionally heard a strange type of strangled moan hovering around, but they were almost immediately followed by a loud screech. When George peeked his head out, he couldn't see anything, although he had seen a large cloud flying in the distance before disappearing around the corner; as he had continued building, he had heard a screech, and was sure those noises were coming from it.

Finally, George came across to an obvious fork in the road – one led towards an almost castle like fortress and the other led towards another one of the light blue, greenish, peaceful feeling forests.

George happily started to make his way towards the forest before something stopped him as he paused, squinting over to the fortress.

Something did not quite add up.

George curiously moved towards it, starting his way down the path. He could see the menacing

skeletons holding swords at a distance, moving around without a purpose. George gulped, hoping not to give them one through him.

George found himself creeping forward along a ledge, looking around, trying to determine what was so strange, what was so off-putting about everything else he had seen. And then he noticed what was missing.

Or rather, almost fell forward into lava because of what was missing.

The path he was on suddenly stopped... but there were random blocks scattered onto the wall ahead of him, seemingly unnatural despite being made of the same nether brick, with huge gaps between them... George followed them with his eyes and saw there was a small one by one section of blocks leading from the platform above, with a slight gap, but definitely into the deadly fortress.

Almost as if...

George grinned widely to himself. Of course! Sap and Bad must have been here, and made stairs, and over time, they must have broken or fallen away. It was OBVIOUSLY a pathway up... the portal had to be on the other side of the fortress!

George placed a block in front of him, before pausing, suddenly feeling a wave of fear sweep over him. How long had he been going for? Was he ready for this? He dug into the wall, carefully considering he might reveal exposed lava (he had narrowly avoided being burnt alive earlier at such an occasion and had also realised water was only good for drinking, not for using; he had thrown the water from a safe distance only to watch sceptically as it disappeared into the air).

Once in, he closed off the entrance behind him and took out a bed after several attempts, thankful Bad had made him pack one away, even if it had taken a while. George still found it hard to get over the fact he could have a full-sized bed in his magical storage, which was probably why it took him the extra effort to visualise it.

He was so tired... maybe he could sleep for a little bit, get some rest... once he had slept, he'd feel much better; Bad always said nothing made the world better than being a snug little muffin.

George placed the bed down, looking at the inviting blankets before him.

George reached down for the blankets...

His hand was close enough to almost feel the warmth of the covers...

Was he tired?

The thought popped into his head just as George was about to make contact.

"... I'm not tired." George stating to himself, looking down at the bed in horror before he realised what he was doing.

Are you seriously going to sleep whilst your family looks for you? George's conscious seemed to have a disapproving tone and George sighed when he realised, he was being selfish. He just thought he was tired. Sap and Bad would not be sleeping right now if it was the other way around.

With a sigh, George carefully picked up the bed, careful not to touch any of the inviting fabric in the process, least he be tempted again.

As George exited his hidey hole, he looked up just in time to see a puff of smoke as both skeleton

and sword disappeared. George furrowed his brows in confusion at the now significantly empty fortress from where he was standing.

This isn't normal.

George had decided he was going to listen to his gut and made his way slowly up towards the platform, building up and out to each individual block. He reached the top and realised, looking around, that it was far too quiet. He approached slowly, feeling scared and attention fully focused and alert for the first time during his exploration of this hell.

This isn't normal.

George held his breath as he bridged the gap between platform and fortress, placing one foot silently in front of the other. He could still hear the general noises of the nether but here, it almost seemed like they were irrelevant. He looked around him as he moved forward, keeping an eye out around him. The fortress platform became a room, with stairs leading up. George tentatively progressed towards them, not daring to move any faster. As he approached the top of the stairs that opened back into the nether, George could hear the distant sound of swords clashing against one another.

“So, they like to fight each other...?” George whispered to the air as he made his way to the top of the stairs. George noted the suddenly open platforms, and noticed a small platform to his left, with a metal box in the centre.

George wanted to investigate but was surprised when his legs started shaking. Puzzled at his own reaction, he looked at the box from a distant, unable to move.

“A spawner is like a cage that has a soul stuck inside. In this case, a zombie soul...”

George recalled the words as he looked in horror at the cage, which had a small, yellow fire inside, frantically bashing itself against its prison to be freed.

That was not a box. That was-

Three flaming beasts of hell suddenly arose from the box, shimmering eyes too bright they hurt to look at; they cast their gaze around for something to engulf in their forever hungry flame.

Of one accord, they looked at George with empty eyes.

Then one of them grinned white flames.

George tried to turn back down the stairs but saw the streak of flames heading directly at him. In a panic, he yelped as he fell forwards on his chest, glancing behind him to see several small fires inches away from his feet, engulfing most of his escape. He had no choice.

He picked himself up and **RAN**.

He could feel the scorching heat as fireballs darted around him, see them landing inches in front of him. George had no idea how to do what he was doing but he let his need to survive guide him as he ran along platforms, seeing the previous pigmen creatures turn into monsters as they snarled at him from the adjacent running spread of land, parallel to the dark brick path he was running on.

George made it to the edge of the nether fortress, panting hard, and spun around to see the monsters had lost sight of him... for now. He looked around him frantically, seeing a platform of crimson trees to his left, just too far away for him to confidently jump. He tried to reach out for blocks, for

anything, but his hand grasped at empty air. He looked down and around him and saw nothing but endless lava. His heart stopped as one of the flaming creatures slowly edged into view, not looking his way.

For now.

“G, you have to jump.”

George spun around to face the human voice that suddenly spoke, so calm and sure. His eyes flew to the figure dressed in dark iron material; George could spot patches of green through the armour.

“What?!” George shouted back, higher than he cared to think about, too scared to process what was happening. The fiery creature looked at him and George found himself in a staring match with the creature. It’s eyes seemed to bore into George’s soul, scorching his very being.

“Listen to me. You are going to jump towards me, and everything will be okay. You need to do this now.”

George could not take his eyes off the burning beast in front of him who was slowly moving closer, seemingly savouring the final moments before consuming its prey. George felt the edge of his ankle move backwards slightly, feeling the lack of ground underneath it.

“You go that way, you die. You have to get back to them, right?”

Those words caught George’s chest and he nodded slowly, the tears in his eyes unable to form at the intense heat coming from all around him. His whole body shook as the blaze advanced. It suddenly shot forward towards George with a white, hot malice.

“JUMP!”

George turned and leapt towards the stranger, arms outstretched, ready to catch the hand extended towards him.

George’s eyes widened as he realised, dumbly, he hadn’t jumped high enough, as the front of his left foot caught on the edge of the wall.

George saw the stranger stand up away from him, leaving George to stare down at the lava he was heading towards.

“At least it is a noble death this time...” George muttered as he closed his eyes, feeling the heat of the lava lake continuously risk. Maybe this was good. Maybe this was the best way to see Bad and Sap again. He just had to remember them.

"Sap... Bad... Sap... Bad..." George chanted to himself as a prayer, closing his eyes and bracing for impact.

George slammed into the lava.

Chapter End Notes

So... it's back!

I wish I could return with some grand entrance but honestly, the truth is, I've missed writing this... but committing to chapters when the whole world (quite literally) has been upside down for some time now was just too much to think about in my head.

I will say this though; the comments and kudos that were slowly and steadily filling up my other email account was the metaphorical equivalent of opening a large birthday card with confetti canons inside. I was so happy and overwhelmed when I checked it for the first time in months to see that people were still reading and commenting on it as recent as a few days ago, and that despite it being almost left for dead, it was very much alive - just having a nap!

So, it seemed the only way I could possibly respond to such positivity and support was to embrace it and... well, it's back!

So, as there are far, FAR too many comments and kudos to respond to, I'm resetting with this chapter. I cannot tell you how much it means to me to come back after such a time away, but let's get this show on the road again!! Thank you, every single one of you reading this and I hope it offers a spark in these dark days.

So, in case you need reminding; leave a comment and kudos and I'll do my best to get back to you; hopefully this chapter will start to resolve the cliff-hangers that were left many, many moons ago (sorry for the wait, I'm planning on making it up to you all!)

Stay safe and well guys and I hope, as always, you enjoy this chapter! x

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!